CX

Corporate Insights:

Understanding Corporate
Strategies and Best Practices

Execs **In The Know**   **COPC**®

Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series
2019 Corporate Edition, Published March 02, 2020

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PREFACE

This year's Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series Corporate Edition report, titled *CX Corporate Insights: Understanding Corporate Strategies and Best Practices*, is the eighth Corporate Edition to be released, and the fifteenth report in the series. Like all previous volumes, this year's CXMB Series Corporate Edition seeks to provide insights into the strategies, priorities and day-to-day customer experience operations of some of the world's largest and most successful brands. The report's content is divided into three primary sections: Strategic Insights, Operational Insights and Channel Results. Not only does each section provide an insider's view of this year's survey participants, they also provide historic and trending data, forming a rich history of how the industry has changed over the years.

Like previous Corporate Edition reports, this year's report continues the tradition of comparing results between Consumer and Corporate Editions of the CXMB Series (page 67). This year's comparisons touch on such topics as meeting consumer needs and expectations, channel consistency within the multichannel experience and the impact of proactive follow-ups.

As in past years, the CXMB Series questions are organized around a specific set of channel definitions, as outlined below:

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

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

Some highlights of note from this year's report:

- 76% of survey respondents feel their organization generally does a good job of meeting customer needs and expectations — this is the lowest result since this question was first asked in 2014 (page 8)

- Only 40% of respondents indicated "Improve the Customer Experience" as their leadership's top priority in the previous 12 months, down from 63% in 2017 (page 13)

- When asked what percentage of customer care engagements were occurring within each channel, 62% was the average response given for Traditional Care — the lowest average in 6 years of data (page 24)

- Only 57% of survey respondents felt their companies had a good understanding of which channels customers preferred to use, down from 69% in 2018 (page 8)

- In 2019, 22% of respondents said a percentage of their customer care budget was dedicated to AI-powered solutions, with an average dedication of 14% of budget, up from 6% in 2018 (page 44)

- The reported resolution rate for AI-powered solutions showed a dramatic increase year-over-year, with 27% of respondents indicating a resolution rate of 70% or better in 2019, up from 17% of respondents in 2018 (page 42)

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

It is our pleasure to once again fulfill the mission of the CXMB Series — to inform the industry on the priorities, best practices and future plans of some of the world's top customer experience programs. We accomplish this by revisiting many of the topics that have garnered much interest in the past, including insights into leadership priorities, program technology, staffing and operational initiatives.

The data contained in this year's report is drawn from the participation of nearly 70 brands, including many segment leaders and CX innovators. The contents of this document would simply not be possible without such generous support, and we are extremely grateful to our community for allowing us to continue to tap into such diverse and unrivaled experience and expertise.

This year's results, perhaps more than those from any previous year, paint a picture of rapid change and great opportunity. Among many brands that participated in this year's survey, there is a sense of transition — of adopting "customer-first" not only in name, but also in deed. It is a change that warrants both retrospection and dedication, but many brands are well on their way to transforming themselves and, in turn, the industry. We are delighted to be able to observe, share in and chronicle such tremendous growth.
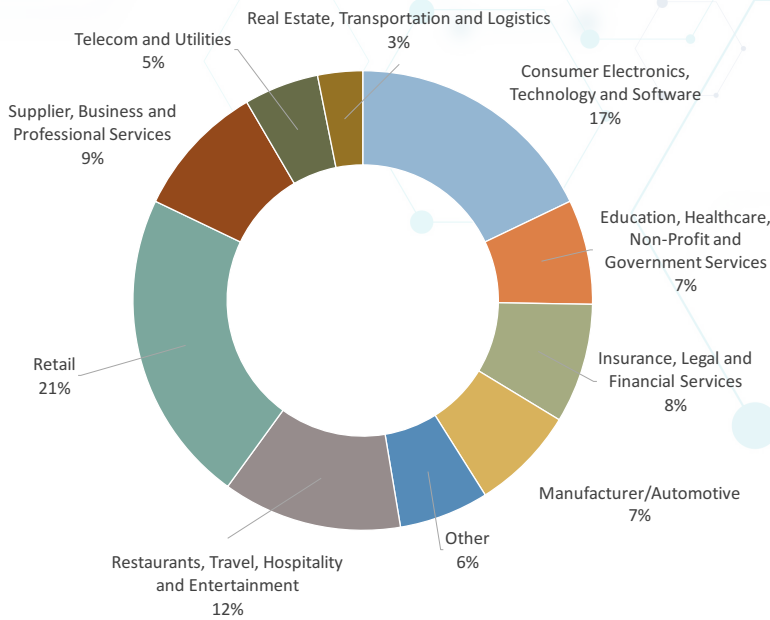
To both our readers and contributors ... thank you!

Kind regards,

ABOUT THE STUDY'S PARTICIPANTS

As in years past, this year's survey participants were spread across a variety of industries, with a strong focus on both Retail and Consumer Electronics, Technology and Software brands. Regarding revenue, the brands represented in this year's results indicated a slightly lower average revenue when compared to 2018 participants. At the same time, the average revenue of 2019 participants was more in line with historic revenue averages, as 2018 was an outlier to the upside.

Breakdown of Survey Participants by Industry

- Real Estate, Transportation and Logistics — 3%
- Telecom and Utilities — 5%
- Supplier, Business and Professional Services — 9%
- Retail — 21%
- Restaurants, Travel, Hospitality and Entertainment — 12%
- Other — 6%
- Manufacturer/Automotive — 7%
- Insurance, Legal and Financial Services — 8%
- Education, Healthcare, Non-Profit and Government Services — 7%
- Consumer Electronics, Technology and Software — 17%

Breakdown of Participant Revenues

$1B or Less — 41%
$1B to $10B — 32%
$10B-$50B — 9%
$50B or More — 7%
Don't Know — 11%

Breakdown of Participant by Business Type

B2B and B2C — 51%
B2C — 31%
B2B — 18%

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

SUN BASKET   FedEx   REALPAGE OUTPERFORM

Crate&Barrel   GROUPON   Nintendo

teamSNAP   BALSAM BRANDS   evergy

Survey Results

CX
Perception

# MEETING EXPECTATIONS, DELIVERING ON BRAND PROMISE AND CHANNEL OFFERING
Strategic Insights — Perception

After years of steady increase in the percentage of brands that felt they were generally meeting the needs and expectations of their customers, 2019 results brought a sharp year-over-year decline. While the cause of this decline is open to speculation, it could be that brands feel they are playing catchup to the industry's innovation leaders. At any rate, these results narrow the gap between corporate and consumer perspectives. For more on this, see the Consumer Edition Comparisons section on page 68.

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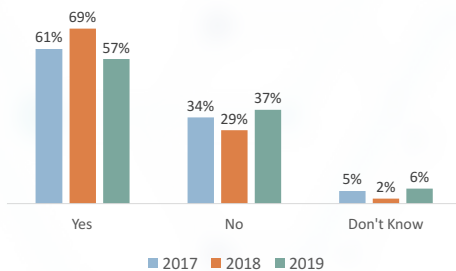

	Yes	No
2016	81%	19%
2017	82%	18%
2018	88%	12%
2019	76%	24%
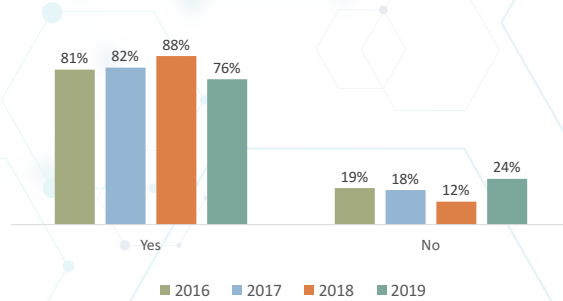
Do you feel your organization generally does a good job of exemplifying your brand promise at every touch point?

|	Yes	No
2016	62%	38%
2017	71%	29%
2018	68%	32%
2019	71%	29%
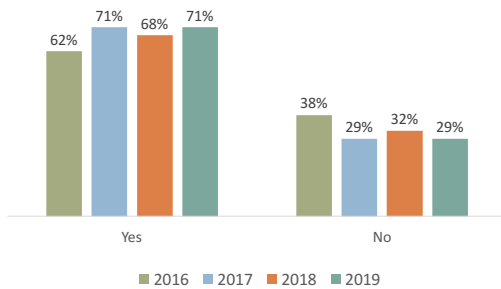
Today's consumers have more options than ever before. In fact, abandoning a brand has never been easier. If brands want to retain customers, they need to do more than deliver a good product/service at a great price. Fulfilling on brand promise at every touch point is a powerful differentiator, and worth serious consideration among the 29% of brands that feel they could be doing a better job in this area.

There was a 12-point year-over-year decline in the percentage of survey respondents who believe their company has a good understanding of channel preference among customers. As new technologies make new and novel solutions possible, brands need to understand which types of channels and solutions their customers are using elsewhere, and how that experience might differ from the channel/solution mix they provide. To find out whether consumers feel they are able to resolve issues in their preferred channel, check out the Consumer Edition Comparisons section on page 72.

Do you believe your company has a good understanding of which channels your customers prefer to use, and how this may or may not differ from what your company offers?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2017	61%	34%	5%
2018	69%	29%	2%
2019	57%	37%	6%

Do you believe your company offers support in all the channels that your customers want to use?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2016	31%	67%	2%
2017	36%	61%	3%
2018	33%	63%	5%
2019	31%	63%	6%
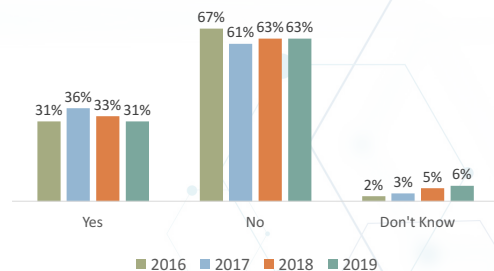
CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING AN
EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
Strategic Insights — Perception

When asked which challenges companies were struggling with most in pursuing delivery of an exceptional customer experience, several themes emerged. These included prioritizing CX within the organization, tracking ROI, wrestling with legacy systems, striking the right balance between increasing CSAT and containing costs, and alignment between organizations and their vendors. Below is a sampling of the responses received to the question.

Generally speaking, which challenge is your company struggling with most in its pursuit to provide an exceptional customer experience?

"Transforming mindset and culture for true customer focus."

"Transitioning from technology-first to customer-first."

"Achieving leadership alignment and establishing unified goals and KPIs."

"Ensuring alignment across all customer channels so that the customer experience is similar regardless of the channel they choose to use."

"Legacy systems preventing us from moving ahead on many customer-first initiatives."

"Balancing resources between short-term needs and long-term goals."

"Understanding our customers' expectations."

"Budget and prioritization against other initiatives."

"Measuring the savings or additional revenue associated with CSAT, FCR and NPS."

"Creating and optimizing processes."

"Aligning over 300 vendors to be customer-focused."

"Problems with some of our technology; difficult to use, doesn't work for certain transactions, difficult navigation."

"Understanding who owns the customer."

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURAL COMMITMENT TO THE CUSTOMER
Strategic Insights — Perception

A customer-first strategy can only be effective if it is supported and cultivated among company leadership. It is concerning that, among 2019 survey results, only 44% of respondents indicated their company's leadership was fully committed to such an approach, while 5% responded with, "No." A customer-first strategy is more than just an approach for delighting customers — it's a strategy for building loyalty and, in turn, increasing revenue and profitability. Brands that deploy a customer-first strategy often thrive, and such a strategy starts with understanding the needs of customers, as well as how competent the brand is at meeting those needs.

Is your company's leadership fully committed to a customer-first strategy?

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Not Sure
2017	49%	49%	0%	2%
2018	57%	38%	3%	2%
2019	44%	48%	5%	3%

Without adequate alignment between leadership and company culture, a customer-first strategy will struggle to take root and thrive. In 2019, only 29% of survey respondents believed the culture of their company was properly aligned behind leadership's customer-first strategy. Such a disconnect is problematic as leadership is, in many ways, disconnected from the customer. So, even if leadership is supportive of a customer-first strategy, the customer won't feel it unless customer-first is ingrained into the DNA (i.e., culture) of the wider organization.

Do you believe the culture of your company is cohesively aligned with your leadership's customer-first strategy?

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Not Sure
2018	44%	47%	7%	2%
2019	29%	62%	7%	2%

INTERACTION PREFERENCES AND
WHAT MATTERS MOST TO CONSUMERS
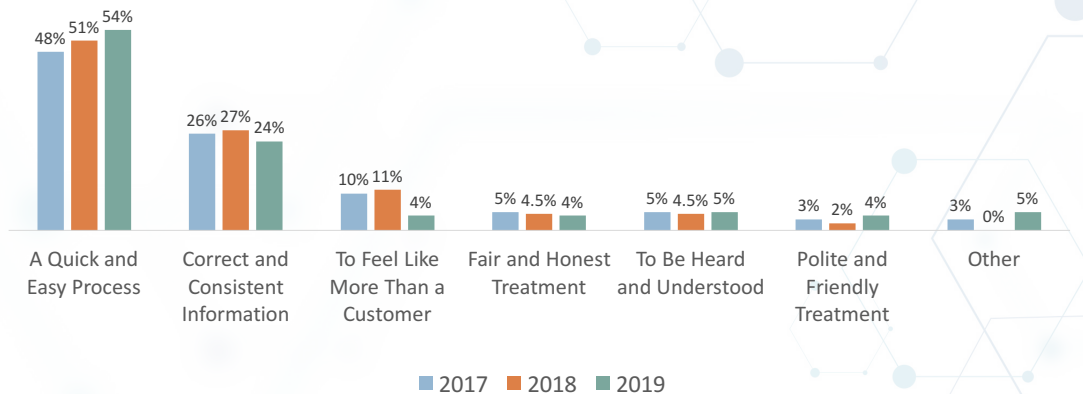### Strategic Insights — Perception

When it comes to interacting with a self-help system versus a live agent, corporate survey respondents continue to perceive issue complexity as a major factor in determining consumer engagement preference. Based on CXMB Series Consumer Edition results from 2016–2018, an average of 56% of consumers would rather interact with a live person for routine issues, while an average of 69% would rather interact with a live person for complex issues. When comparing these results with those below, corporate survey respondents continue to underestimate the consumer's desire to interact with a live agent for routine interactions, while overestimating the consumer's desire to interact with a live agent for complex issues.

In the event of a (routine/complex) customer care issue, which do you think your customers would rather interact with (assuming both are equally capable of resolving the issue)?
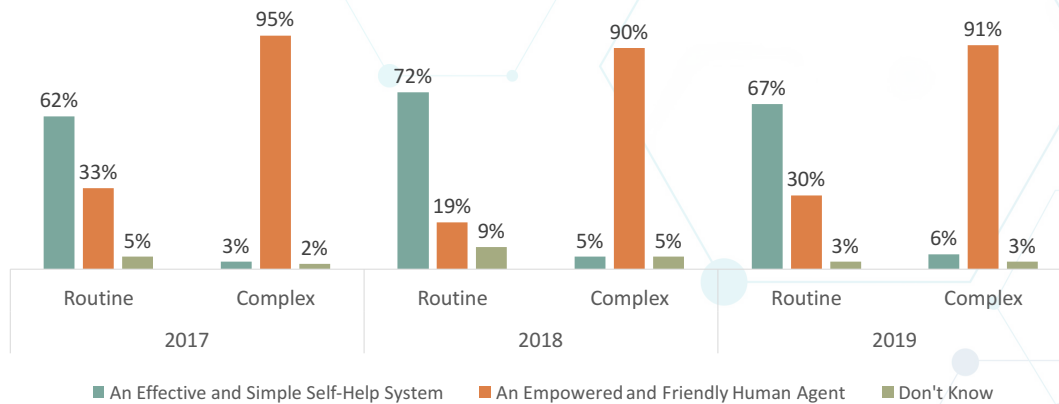
In 2019, corporate survey participants were strengthened in their belief that "A Quick and Easy Process" was the most important thing among their customers when working to resolve a customer care issue. "Correct and Consistent Information" came in a distant second, echoing results from previous years. And, while "A Quick and Easy Process" does rank high in importance to consumers, it is consistently matched by another, equally important consideration according to CXMB Series Consumer Edition results. For more on this, check out the Consumer Edition Comparisons section on page 69.

Aside from getting their issue resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important for your customers when dealing with a large brand to resolve a customer care issue?
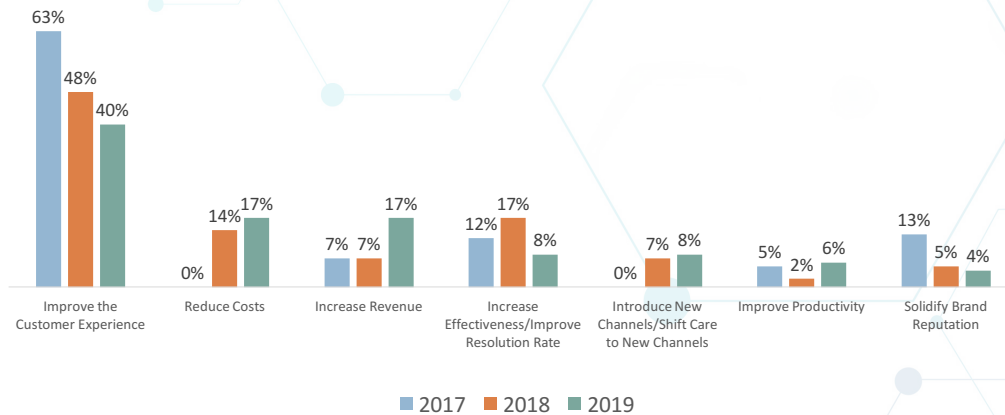
CX
Priorities & Initiatives

PAST AND FUTURE PRIORITIES
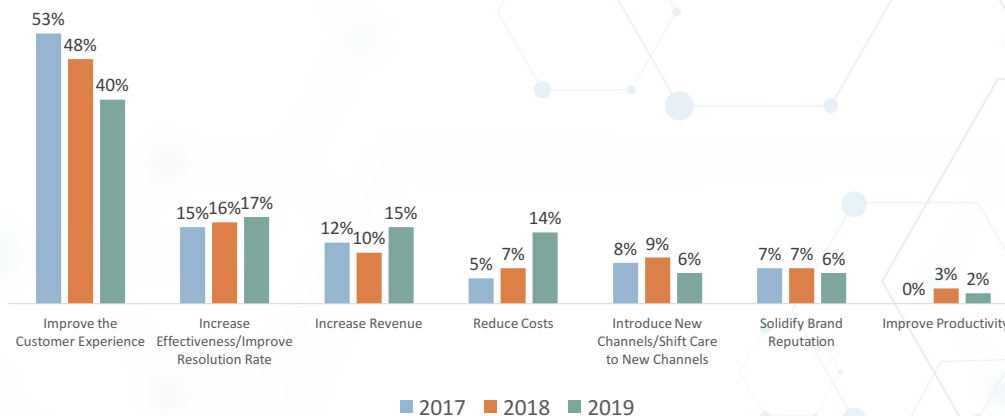## Strategic Insights — Priorities

In a pair of questions aimed at identifying the top priorities of leadership (both past and future), a definitive trend has emerged. At face value, the trend seems to indicate a declining focus on improving the customer experience, coupled with increased attention on reducing costs and increasing revenue. But these results almost certainly generate more questions than answers, such as, are companies truly less focused on CX, or are companies really looking to reap the financial benefits of past investment in CX-improvement initiatives? In other words, are companies deliberately pausing their focus on CX improvement to gauge the financial impact of recent investments in things like new tools and technology, agent training and other spend aimed at creating a more efficient and effective contact center?

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

Category	2017	2018	2019
Improve the Customer Experience	63%	48%	40%
Reduce Costs	0%	14%	17%
Increase Revenue	7%	7%	17%
Increase Effectiveness/Improve Resolution Rate	12%	17%	8%
Introduce New Channels/Shift Care to New Channels	0%	7%	8%
Improve Productivity	5%	2%	6%
Solidify Brand Reputation	13%	5%	4%

Similar to the results above, survey respondents see the future priorities of their leadership focusing less on CX improvement and more on business-critical components like cost and revenue generation. If the most obvious explanation is the correct one — that brands are, in fact, diverting focus away from CX improvement — it is incumbent on CX leaders to make the case that investment in an improved customer experience is a surefire way to achieve increased revenue through the creation of happier, more loyal customers.

What will be the top priority of your company's leadership regarding customer experience management in the coming year?

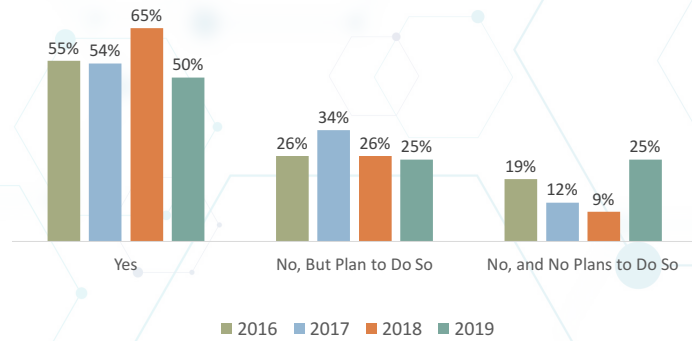| Category	2017	2018	2019
Improve the Customer Experience	53%	48%	40%
Increase Effectiveness/Improve Resolution Rate	15%	16%	17%
Increase Revenue	12%	10%	15%
Reduce Costs	5%	7%	14%
Introduce New Channels/Shift Care to New Channels	8%	9%	6%
Solidify Brand Reputation	7%	7%	6%
Improve Productivity	0%	3%	2%

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING
AND UPCOMING INITIATIVES
Strategic Insights — Priorities

This year's results didn't only register a low in the percentage of brands that had conducted a customer journey mapping project in the previous 12 months, it also marked a high in the percentage of brands answering, "No, and No Plans to Do So." These results seem to support other findings that suggest a decelerating interest in customer experience improvement, as customer journey mapping is an exceptional tool for helping brands understand the current customer experience.

Has your company conducted any customer journey mapping projects in the past 12 months?

Response	2016	2017	2018	2019
Yes	55%	54%	65%	50%
No, But Plan to Do So	26%	34%	26%	25%
No, and No Plans to Do So	19%	12%	9%	25%

Of all your company's upcoming customer care initiatives, please briefly describe the one you think will have the most positive impact on the customer experience.

As in past years, many of the initiatives described in response to the question above revolved around technology investment, including new tools and channels. While investment in these areas is essential, brands ought to take care not to frame such investments as a panacea. Cultural changes, improved processes and paying greater attention to the voice of the customer are also potent avenues for creating meaningful, lasting change within the contact center.

Below is a sampling of some of the responses received to the above question.

"Consolidation of agent tools."

"Launching new tools in order to promote true omnichannel support."

"The creation of an online self-help portal to handle simple customer service-related concerns."

"Proactive intervention — reaching out before an issue arises."

"Centralizing support with a new vendor who is more closely aligned with the vision of our company."

"Overhaul of our new hire training curriculum."

"Providing goodwill points and credits when customers have legitimate complaints."

"Implementing new customer surveying which will give us better customer insights."

"We'll be offering new channels."

"Introducing artificial intelligence into our phone and chat transactions."
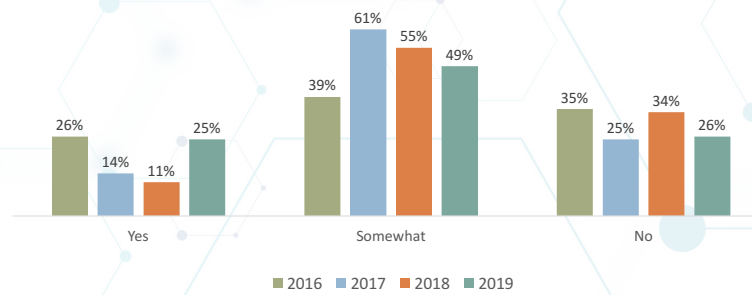
"We are shifting from an internal focus of efficiency to a focus on the customer experience."
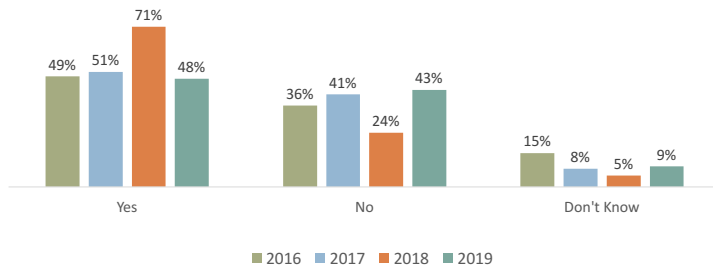
CROSS-CHANNEL CONSISTENCY
Strategic Insights — Initiatives

Although it doesn't rise to the same level of importance as ease or fair treatment, channel consistency is well-valued by consumers as they engage brands to resolve customer care issues. Accordingly, the dramatic year-over-year increase in the percentage of brands that feel they do a good job of providing a consistent experience is good news. But, with that number standing at only 25%, there is still tremendous opportunity in this area. For the consumer view of how well brands are doing in this area, check out the Consumer Edition Comparison section on page 70.

Do you feel your organization does a good job of providing a consistent customer experience when your customers engage your brand across different channels and solutions?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
2016	26%	39%	35%
2017	14%	61%	25%
2018	11%	55%	34%
2019	25%	49%	26%

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

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2016	49%	36%	15%
2017	51%	41%	8%
2018	71%	24%	5%
2019	48%	43%	9%

While 2018 data revealed a steep increase in the percentage of brands with initiatives to create greater consistency across channels, 2019 brought a return to historic averages, with about half (48%) of respondents indicating such initiatives. As noted above, channel consistency is something valued by consumers, and brands can positively impact the customer experience by focusing efforts in this area.

In a follow-up to the above question, the 48% of brands that indicated they had specific initiatives to create greater consistency across channels were asked to describe their initiatives. Many of the answers received revolved around the implementation of new tools or technology that would allow for a wider view of engagement history. Other common responses included better internal communication and training, as well as review of company policies and procedures.

Below is a sampling of some of the specific responses received.

"Improving the ability of agents to see the customer history, including a better view of previous engagements."

"Creation of cross-channel business rules and processes alignment between web, IVR and live agents."

"We're actively looking for inconsistencies and addressing them through systematic changes or training."

"Ensuring that our knowledge base is updated and our agents are regularly trained."

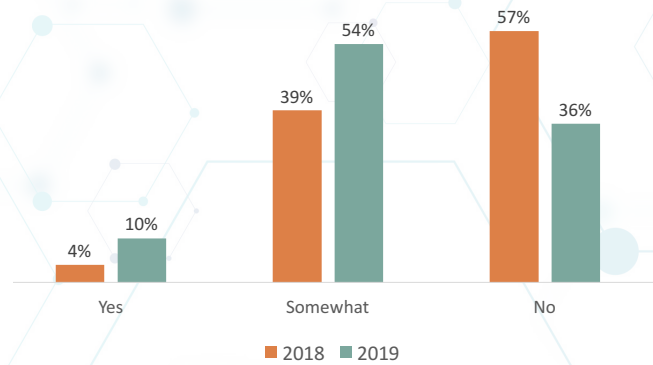*"We're improving our quality assurance program and tools."*

"We have an initiative to review our customer policies."

SEAMLESS AND EASY TRANSITIONS ACROSS CHANNELS
Strategic Insights — Initiatives

Based on results from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 63% of surveyed consumers claimed to have had one or more multichannel engagements in the previous 12 months. This number is only expected to grow over time, so it's important for brands to excel at providing a seamless and easy experience as their customers navigate across channels. Although the picture improved year-over-year, with only 10% of surveyed brands claiming they were doing a good job at providing a seamless and easy cross-channel experience (and 36% indicating they were not), it's clear that brands need to dedicate more resources to the endeavor.

Do you feel your organization does a good job of providing a seamless and easy experience as your customers transition between different channels and solutions?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
2018	4%	39%	57%
2019	10%	54%	36%

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2018	40%	44%	16%
2019	28%	65%	7%
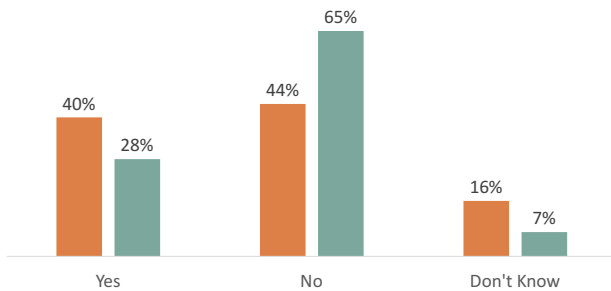
Although there is plenty of opportunity for creating an easier and more seamless cross-channel experience for consumers, only about one in four of the brands that participated in this year's survey indicated they had initiatives dedicated to such a pursuit. And, as seen below in the verbatim, the primary mode to get there seems to be more self-service and automation as opposed to refined policies or more and/or better-trained human resources.

Briefly describe your organization's initiatives to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels.

Similar to initiatives to create greater consistency across channels (previous page), initiatives to create greater ease mostly revolve around the introduction of new technology, such as systems and tools. Based on the responses received, automation is viewed as a primary vehicle for achieving greater ease, although brands should take care here, as consumers don't always view self-help and automated tools as a pathway to a better customer experience. In fact, in results from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 38% of consumers felt the increasing availability of unassisted solutions was making the overall customer experience worse, while only 28% felt these solutions were making the overall customer experience better.

"Improve our existing customer engagement platforms."

"We'll provide more self-service and loyalty and customer identity initiatives."

"We're working on a multi-year project to replace our legacy systems."

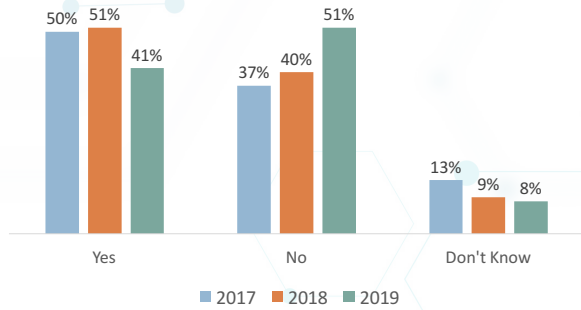*"Looking at intelligent routing and automation solutions."*

"Developing a project to identify intent and push the customer to the most effective channel."

CX

Program Structure

THE JOURNEY TOWARD OMNICHANNEL
Strategic Insights — Program Structure

Since the question was first asked in 2017, the percentage of brands describing their support as "omnichannel" has been steadily rising, doubling from 11% in 2017 to 22% in 2019. Omnichannel service differs from multichannel in that omnichannel service focuses on the end-to-end experience, emphasizing seamless maneuvering between channels. Programs that offer omnichannel service also tend to provide agents with a better view of the customer's journey, with detailed transaction histories that span across channels.

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

	Omnichannel	Multichannel	Don't Know
2017	11%	87%	2%
2018	16%	78%	6%
2019	22%	78%	0%

What level of importance does your company place on providing your customers with an omnichannel experience?

	A Top Priority	As Important or More Important Than Other Initiatives	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
2017	7%	20%	60%	8%	5%
2018	9%	25%	51%	11%	4%
2019	11%	17%	54%	15%	3%
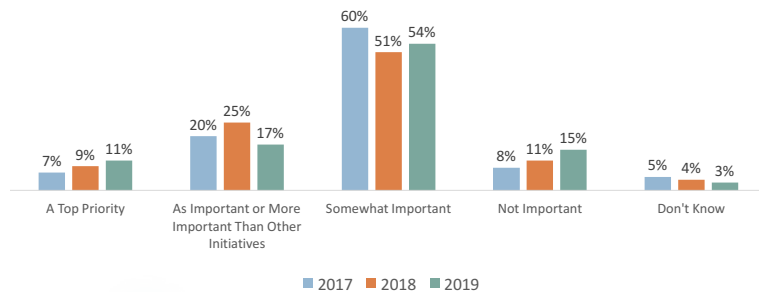
Although the percentage of brands offering omnichannel support has increased over the years, the importance brands place on offering omnichannel service hasn't kept pace. In fact, in 2019, twice as many brands consider t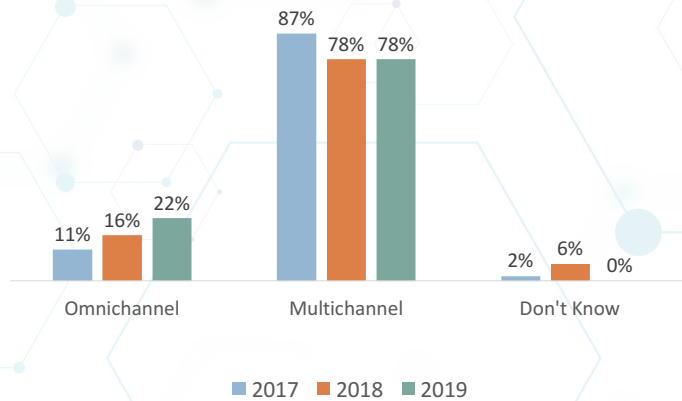he provision of omnichannel as, "Not Important" as those in 2017. While the exact reason for this isn't clear, it could be that, as previous investments are realized and omnichannel functionality comes online, omnichannel no longer tops the list when it comes to future priorities.

An important component of providing an exceptional omnichannel (and even multichannel) experience is an accurate and accessible interaction history. As results to the right indicate, the industry has been moving in the right direction in this area with a steady increase in the percentage of brands that provide their agents with the ability to review the complete thread of interactions for their specific customers. Not only does this give agents the background they need to better assist customers, it also creates the right environment for providing a consistent experience, regardless of which channels customers opt to use when working to resolve their issues.

Do your agents have the ability to review the complete thread of interactions for a specific customer across all channels of interaction?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2016	26%	72%	2%
2017	30%	70%	0%
2018	40%	53%	7%
2019	44%	52%	4%
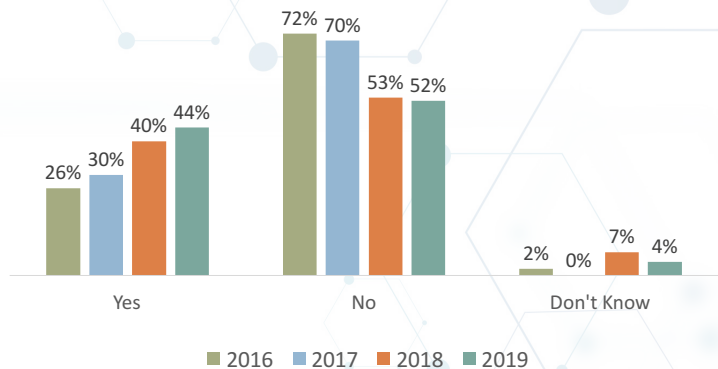
UTILIZING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENTS
Strategic Insights — Program Structure

After two years of unchanged results, 2019 brought a slight dip in the percentage of brands that have a system in place for utilizing customer feedback for the purpose of improving the customer experience. Tapping into customer feedback is perhaps one of the best sources for understanding what is and isn't working with a CX program, and this information can be drawn from a variety of sources, including a company's quality program, engagement transcripts and agent reporting, as well as direct surveying.

Does your organization have a system for utilizing customer feedback to improve the customer experience?

2019 — Yes: 73%
2018 — Yes: 77%
2017 — Yes: 77%
2016 — Yes: 92%

In describing how they are utilizing customer feedback for improving the customer experience, survey respondents mostly made mention of surveys and speech/text analytics. There were also a fair number of responses that spoke to the fact that utilization of customer feedback was a team effort, with several responses making mention of either cross-functional or cross-departmental team involvement.

Below is a sampling of responses received.

"We have a cross-functional team that analyzes available data and promotes continuous improvement."

"Customer satisfaction surveying after every interaction with a customer support agent."

"We have post-call surveys and conduct analysis on escalations."

"We use speech analytics, case data and surveys for trend identification. Results are shared internally, as well as used for coaching."

"We use third-party software tools to collect data, as well as collect transactional surveys."

Following a negative customer care experience, does your organization proactively follow up with customers to help remedy the situation?

2019 — Yes: 72%
2018 — Yes: 75%
2017 — Yes: 83%

As seen in the Consumer Edition Comparison section on page 71, proactively following up with a customer after a negative customer care experience can have a profound impact on future purchase intent. In 2019, the percentage of brands conducting proactive follow-ups after a negative experience remained mostly flat, at 72%. By proactively following up, not only does it provide brands with another opportunity to help remedy the situation, it also lets customers know they are valued, and that brands are truly interested in doing what's right by the customer.

STRATEGIC INSIGHTS CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

- 76% of survey respondents feel their organization generally does a good job of meeting customer needs and expectations — this is the lowest result since this questions was first asked in 2014 (page 8)

- Only 40% of respondents indicated "Improve the Customer Experience" as their leadership's top priority in the previous 12 months, down from 63% in 2017 (page 13)

- When asked what they thought was most important to customers when resolving an issue, 54% of corporate survey respondents said, "A Quick and Easy Process," followed by, "Correct and Consistent Information" at 24%; the number-one response among consumers: "Fair and Honest Treatment" at 28%, followed by "A Quick and Easy Process" at 26% (page 11 & 69)

In a pair of questions that date back to the beginning of the CXMB Series, consumers were asked if brands were meeting their customer care needs and expectations, and corporate survey participants were asked if they felt their brand was meeting the needs and expectations of its customers. Historically, there's been a massive delta between the two sets of responses. In 2019, 35% of consumers felt their needs and expectation were being met, while 76% of corporate survey respondents felt their brands were meeting customer needs and expectations. Although the gulf between the two remains vast, 2019 went a long way in closing the gap. This shows greater self-awareness among brands, and this is further reflected in a question about priorities. In 2018, 63% of survey respondents named "Improve the Customer Experience" as the top priority among their leadership. In 2019, only 40% of respondents said the same.

The next frontier for brands is to better understand what's most important to their customers, and consumers at large. When 54% of brands think "A Quick and Easy Process" is what is most important to consumers, yet the number-one answer among consumers is "Fair and Honest Treatment," companies should view such results as a clarion call to investigate what really matters to consumers.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

Are we doing a good job of educating the organization on the business advantages of focusing on creating an exceptional customer experience through a customer-first approach?

Do we feel our priorities are aligned behind providing an exceptional customer care experience?

Are we paying as much attention to how customers are treated as we are to the speed and ease of our customer care process? Do our policies make sense from the customer's perspective?

CX

Operational
Insights

- Volumes and Growth
- Monitoring, Measuring
  and Performance Improvement
- Staffing
- Technology

CX

Volumes
and Growth

PROGRAM AND CHANNEL VOLUME
Operational Insights — Volumes and Growth

As described on page 5 of this report, the average revenue profile of this year's participant brands was down from those in 2018 which, itself, was an outlier to the upside. Not surprisingly, this translates to smaller program sizes and lower interaction volumes, as depicted below. In 2019, about a third of survey respondents indicated weekly interaction volumes of 30,000 or more, compared to about half of all survey respondents in last year's report.

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

	Less than a Thousand	1,000 to 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 to 30,000	30,000+
2017	9%	19%	14%	21%	37%
2018	2%	14%	17%	19%	48%
2019	11%	19%	15%	21%	34%
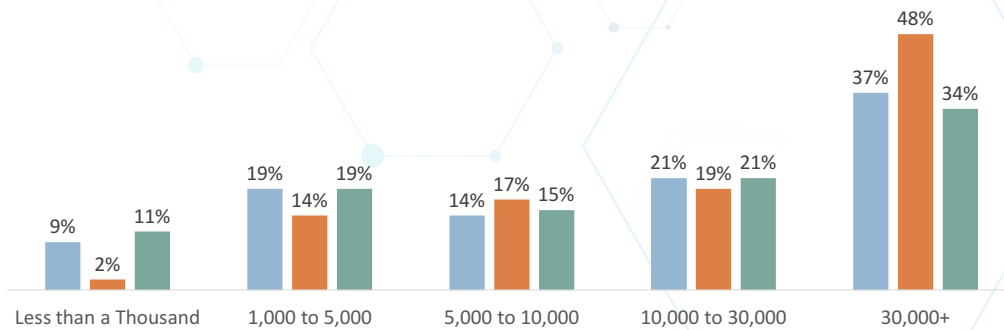
Traditional Care volumes continue to curtail, giving weight to similar results from the CXMB Series Consumer Edition report. Although these declines are not overly dramatic, they are consistent, depicting real change within the customer care space. While some of this change can be attributed to consumer preference, it is also impacted by the actions of some brands to deliberately shift traffic from one channel to another, as outlined on page 17.

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

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Mobile Care	Social Media Care
2016	73%	16%	4%	7%
2017	73%	18%	4%	5%
2018	64%	25%	7%	4%
2019	62%	25%	7%	6%
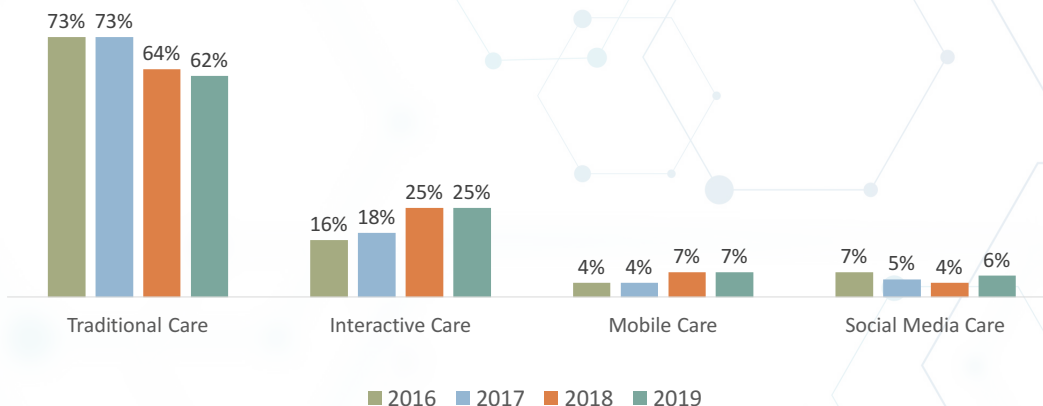
AUTOMATED VERSUS LIVE AND CHANNEL GROWTH
Operational Insights — Volumes and Growth

The percentage of automated versus human-to-human engagement has remained remarkably steady over four years' worth of data, with a little more than an average of 70% of engagements conducted via human-to-human across surveyed brands. That said, it's likely these numbers will soon begin to change as more brands pour investment dollars into AI-powered solutions, and the technologies that have benefited from previous investments mature.

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

Human-to-Human	Automated
72%, 74%, 71%, 72%	28%, 26%, 29%, 28%
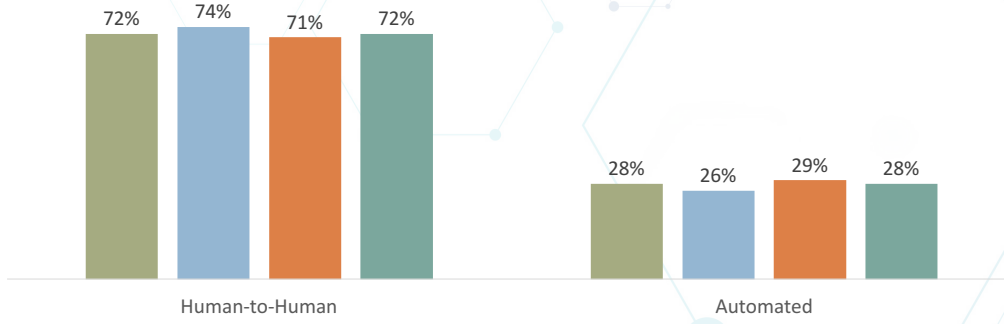
Interactive Care continues to figure prominently when brands are asked which channels have seen the most growth in the previous 12 months. In fact, in this year's results, half of the brands surveyed named Interactive Care as the channel of most growth. Mobile Care has also continued to increase, registering its second consecutive year of strong growth. At the same time, growth with the Social Media Care channel continued to slow, with only 6% of brands naming Social Media Care as the channel of most growth, down from 18% in 2016.

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

	Traditional Care	Social Media Care	Interactive Care	Mobile Care
2016	48%	18%	31%	3%
2017	34%	17%	46%	3%
2018	22%	13%	56%	9%
2019	31%	6%	50%	13%
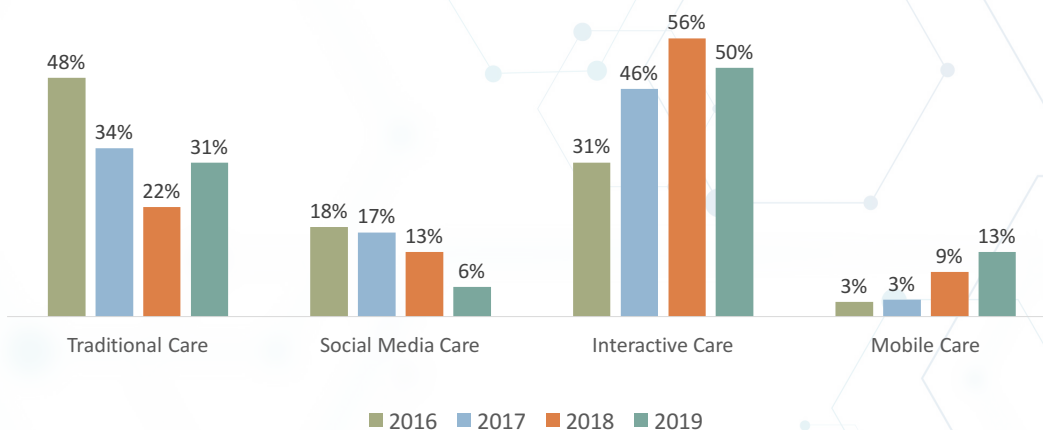
CHANNEL TRAFFIC CHANGES
Operational Insights — Volumes and Growth

While the question at the bottom of the previous page asked organizations which channel experienced the most growth, the set of questions below examines the traffic growth of each individual channel. Based on these results, it's clear that growth is still the predominate story among all channels, particularly in the alternative channels (Interactive, Social Media and Mobile Care), where there is virtually no decrease in channel traffic. Traditional Care, on the other hand, presents a far different story, with roughly one in three brands indicating a decrease in channel traffic, consistent with results going back to 2016. This is further evidence of the continued slowdown of the Traditional Care channel.

Changes in channel traffic over the previous 12 months (by channel):

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

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016	37%	30%	31%	2%
2017	34%	30%	34%	2%
2018	47%	30%	21%	2%
2019	40%	30%	28%	2%
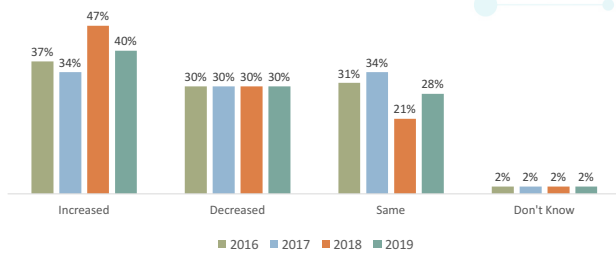
In the past year, how has traffic to your Interactive Care channels that require human assistance (such as online or video chat) changed?
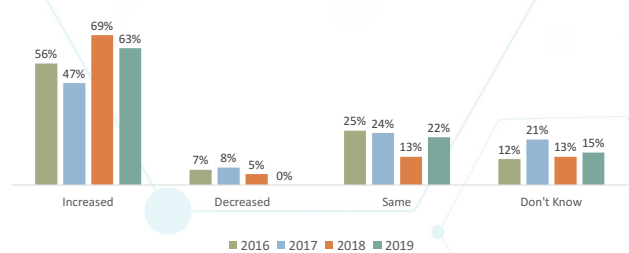
	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016	56%	7%	25%	12%
2017	47%	8%	24%	21%
2018	69%	5%	13%	13%
2019	63%	0%	22%	15%
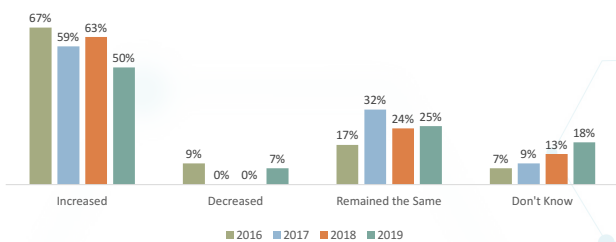
In the past year, how has the volume of interactions on social media changed?

	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same	Don't Know
2016	67%	9%	17%	7%
2017	59%	0%	32%	9%
2018	63%	0%	24%	13%
2019	50%	7%	25%	18%

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

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016	45%	0%	44%	11%
2017	62%	0%	14%	24%
2018	50%	0%	30%	20%
2019	57%	0%	19%	24%
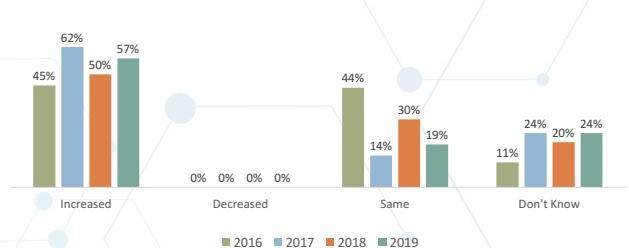
SOLUTION TRAFFIC CHANGES
Operational Insights — Volumes and Growth

Similar to results on the previous page, alternative care channels (in this case, Interactive and Mobile Care) tell stories of powerful growth, while Traditional Care tells an entirely mixed story. Although Phone and Email err on the side of growth, both In-Person, and especially Mail, show signs of decline. This, too, fits the pattern of both consumer preference, as well as intentional traffic shifting on behalf of brands (page 17).

Changes in channel solutions over the previous 12 months (by channel):

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

Channel	Increased	Decreased	Same
Phone	42%	22%	36%
Email	42%	33%	25%
Mail	0%	45%	55%
In-Person	25%	33%	42%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Same
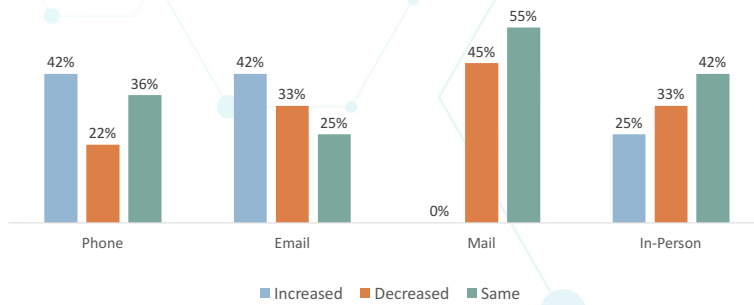
How has traffic volume changed for each of the following Interactive Care solutions over the previous 12 months?
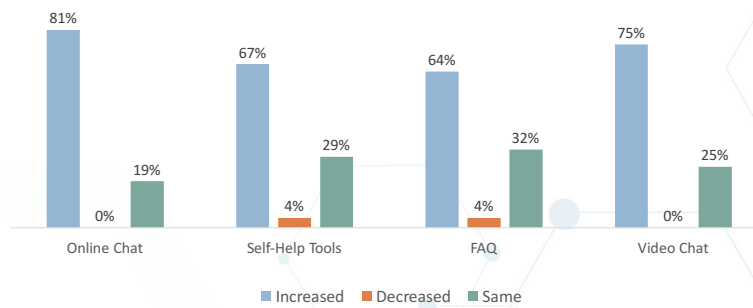
Channel	Increased	Decreased	Same
Online Chat	81%	0%	19%
Self-Help Tools	67%	4%	29%
FAQ	64%	4%	32%
Video Chat	75%	0%	25%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Same

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

Channel	Increased	Decreased	Same
Company App(s)	67%	0%	33%
SMS/Text	72%	14%	14%
Mobile Chat	83%	0%	17%

■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Same
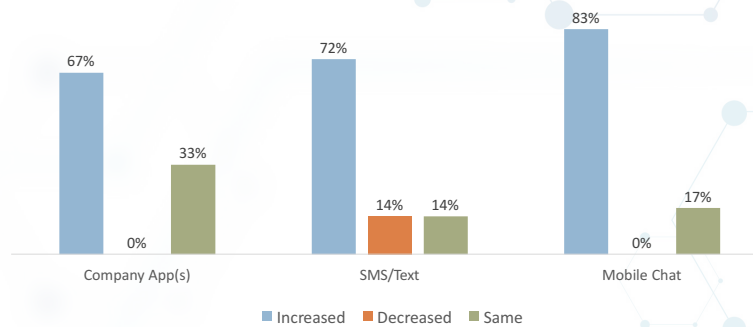
CX
Monitoring, Measuring & Performance Improvement

MONITORING AND MEASURING THE EXPERIENCE
Operational Insights — Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvement

The way in which companies are monitoring and measuring customer experience saw no significant change year-over-year, with most companies (43%) continuing to measure interactions in some channels. Few companies (15%) measure the end-to-end journey across all channels, which is truly an industry best practice for brands seeking the most complete view of the current experience.

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

Measuring Interactions in Some Channels: 34% (2016), 57% (2017), 43% (2018), 43% (2019)
Measuring Interactions in All Channels: 31% (2016), 17% (2017), 27% (2018), 28% (2019)
Measuring Interactions in a Single Channel: 20% (2016), 19% (2017), 12% (2018), 14% (2019)
Measuring the Entire Customer Experience Across All Channels: 15% (2016), 7% (2017), 18% (2018), 15% (2019)
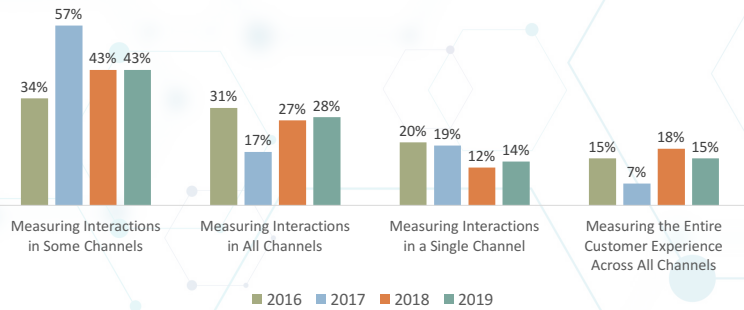
Does your organization measure multichannel performance against single channel performance (i.e., resolution or satisfaction rates)?

Yes: 26% (2016), 13% (2017), 9% (2018), 17% (2019)
No: 64% (2016), 82% (2017), 84% (2018), 76% (2019)
Don't Know: 10% (2016), 5% (2017), 7% (2018), 7% (2019)
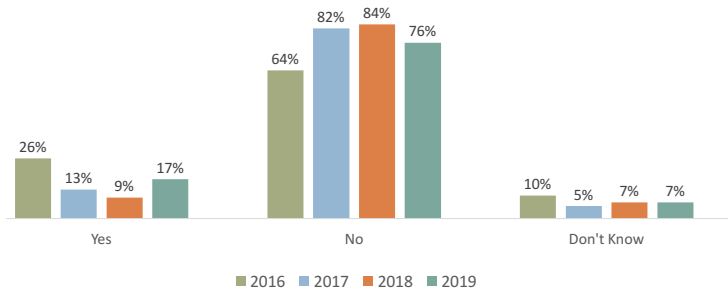
After reaching a low point in 2018, the percentage of brands that measure multichannel performance against single-channel performance perked up in 2019, increasing eight points year-over-year. By comparing things like resolution rates, CSAT and customer ease between multi- and single-channel journeys, brands can better identify inconsistencies and shortcomings for specific channels, leading to an improved end-to-end journey and smoother navigation for multichannel engagements.

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

Customer Satisfaction: 77% (2016), 77% (2017), 76% (2018), 72% (2019)
NPS: 58% (2016), 67% (2017), 59% (2018), 59% (2019)
Customer Effort: 32% (2016), 28% (2017), 29% (2018), 21% (2019)
Other: 11% (2016), 10% (2017), 12% (2018), 15% (2019)
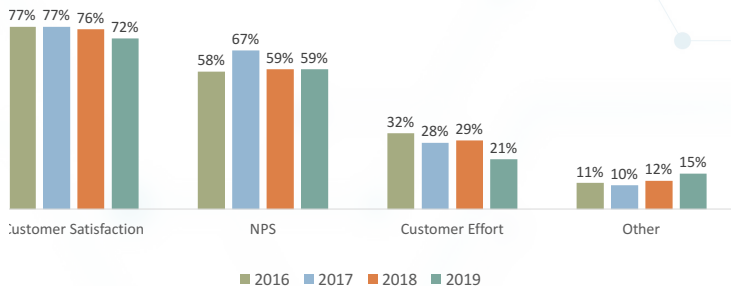
In 2019, both Customer Satisfaction and Customer Effort dipped in use, while Net Promoter Score (NPS) held steady. The "Other" bucket also saw a slight increase and, in write-ins, included metrics such as First Contact Resolution (FCR), Likelihood to Recommend (LTR) and Brand Impact.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION BY CHANNEL
Operational Insights — Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvement

When asked in which channel(s) they measure CSAT, 2019 respondents provided significantly different answers for two specific channels: Interactive Care and Social Media Care. Interactive Care was down 20 points year-over-year, while Social Media Care was off 11 points over the same period. It can be surmised that this difference was due, at least in part, to the revenue disparities between 2018 and 2019 cohorts. Survey participants from 2018 enjoyed a larger revenue profile, likely providing more resources for broader measurement of CSAT.

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

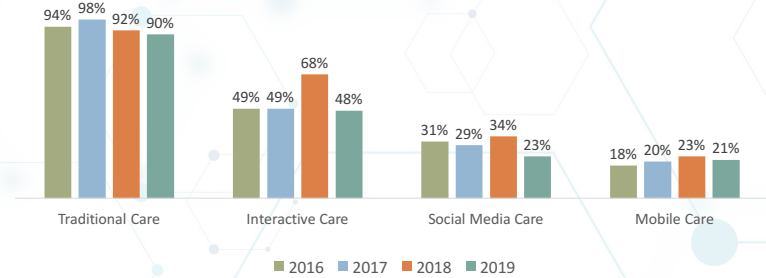|	2016	2017	2018	2019
Traditional Care	94%	98%	92%	90%
Interactive Care	49%	49%	68%	48%
Social Media Care	31%	29%	34%	23%
Mobile Care	18%	20%	23%	21%

In 2019, survey respondents continue to mostly point toward Traditional Care when asked which channel consistently provides the highest level of CSAT, although the results were down slightly year-over-year, coming in at 70% versus 79%. All other channels benefited from the shake-up, with Social Media Care gaining the most both in nominal terms and as a percentage, moving from 2% in 2018 to 6% in 2019. If brands hope to provide a consistent, positive experience across channels, it will become increasingly important to not only monitor CSAT on all channels, but to also ensure that every channel provides a similar, highly satisfying experience.

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Traditional Care	73%	81%	79%	70%
Interactive Care	20%	11%	15%	18%
Mobile Care	2%	4%	4%	6%
Social Media Care	5%	4%	2%	6%
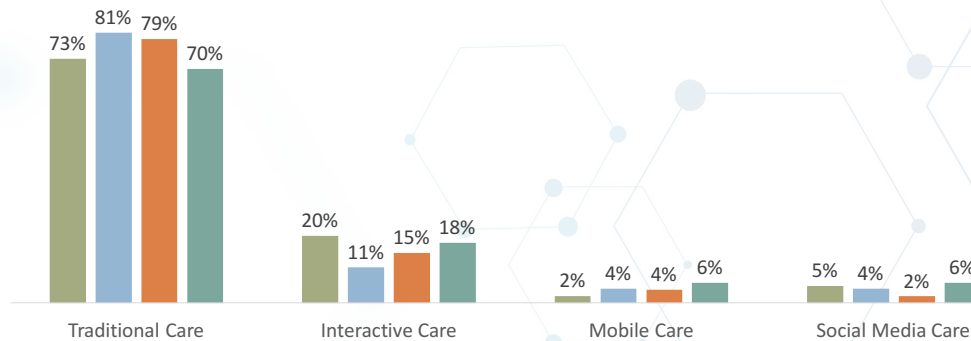
FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION
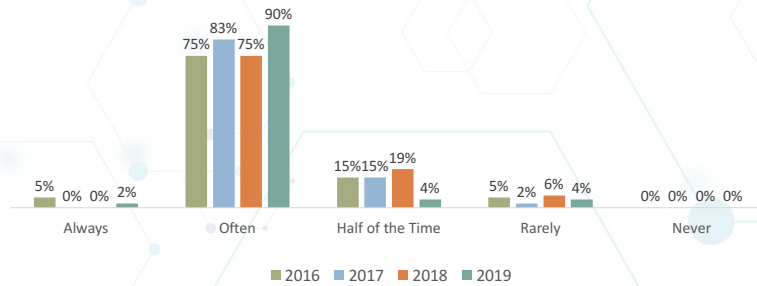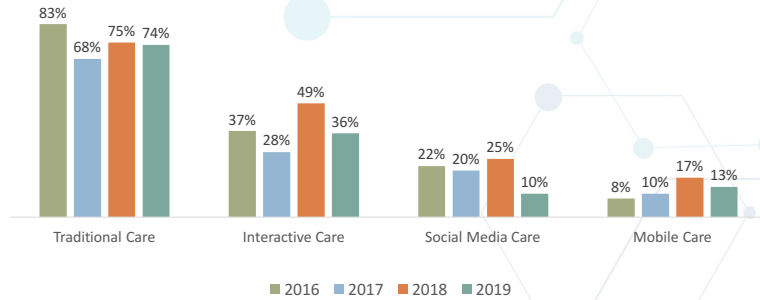Operational Insights — Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvement

Positive reporting on first contact resolution (FCR) strengthened in 2019, with 90% of survey respondents indicating issues were "Often" resolved during the first instance of connecting with the customer. A strengthening FCR is also supported by CXMB Series Consumer Edition data. In recent years, there has been a small but steady increase in the percent of consumers who say their issues are "Always" or "Often" resolved during first contact, coupled with a decrease in those who respond with "Rarely" or "Never."

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
2016	5%	75%	15%	5%	0%
2017	0%	83%	15%	2%	0%
2018	0%	75%	19%	6%	0%
2019	2%	90%	4%	4%	0%

As seen with CSAT monitoring (page 30), 2019 results indicated a decrease in FCR monitoring activity (particularly among alternative channels). Like CSAT monitoring, this difference is likely due to the diminished revenue profile of 2019 survey respondents versus 2018 respondents. FCR is a key measure of program efficacy, and can have a profound impact on CSAT and the perceived ease of a transaction.

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

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Social Media Care	Mobile Care
2016	83%	37%	22%	8%
2017	68%	28%	20%	10%
2018	75%	49%	25%	17%
2019	74%	36%	10%	13%

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

	Traditional Care	Interactive Care	Social Media Care	Mobile Care
2016	75%	61%	54%	47%
2017	78%	60%	46%	31%
2018	71%	76%	64%	69%
2019	77%	62%	62%	64%
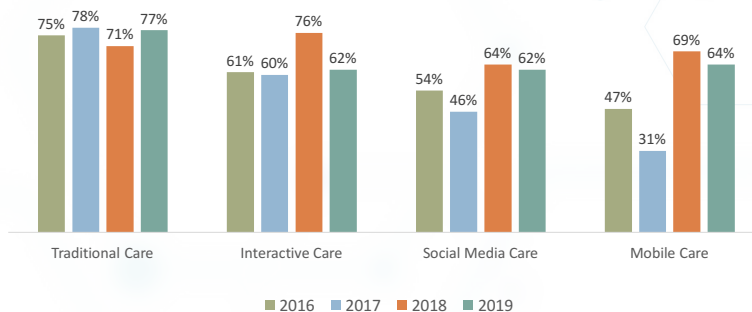
Similar to resolution rates, FCR rates for the Traditional Care channel continue to mostly outshine those of alternative care channels. Brands should seek to identify the causes of these outcomes, be they policies, resources or agent training. They should also find new ways for boosting the FCR of alternative channels, particularly as these channels continue to grow in use among consumers.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING
Operational Insights — Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvement

Quality assurance (QA) programs play several roles within an organization. Not only are they essential for verifying skills, monitoring processes and ensuring adherence to policy and compliance to regulations (all ultimately improving the customer experience), QA programs can also act as a valuable source for business intelligence, including Voice o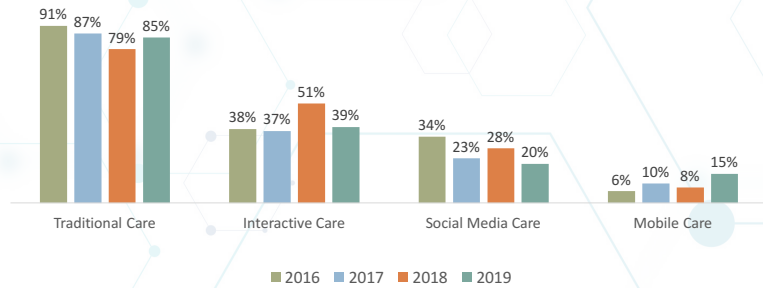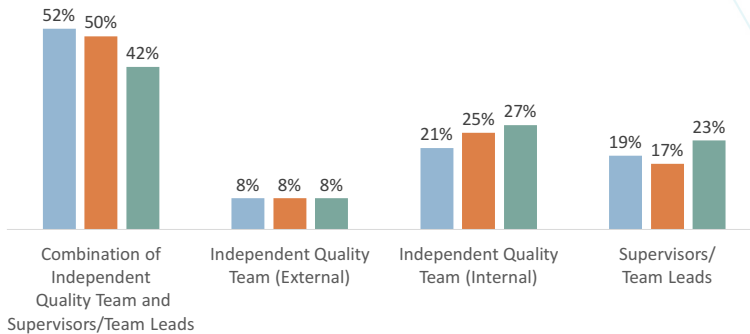f the Customer data. In 2019, Traditional Care continues to be the most popular channel for QA monitoring, followed distantly by Interactive Care.

Does your organization have a Quality Assurance Program in place for any of the following channels? (Check all that apply)
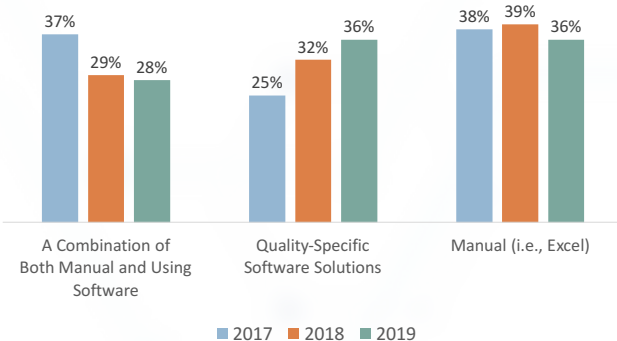
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Traditional Care	91%	87%	79%	85%
Interactive Care	38%	37%	51%	39%
Social Media Care	34%	23%	28%	20%
Mobile Care	6%	10%	8%	15%

Who conducts your Quality Assurance monitoring?

	2017	2018	2019
Combination of Independent Quality Team and Supervisors/Team Leads	52%	50%	42%
Independent Quality Team (External)	8%	8%	8%
Independent Quality Team (Internal)	21%	25%	27%
Supervisors/Team Leads	19%	17%	23%

Although the bulk of QA monitoring is still conducted by a combination of an independent QA team and supervisors/team leads, monitoring by a sole, independent, internal QA teams continues to grow in popularity, cresting 25% for the first time in 2019, reaching 27% of respondents. Regardless of the structure of the monitoring team, effective and precise calibration is the cornerstone of conducting valuable QA monitoring.

Since 2017, the use of quality-specific software solutions has continued to gain in popularity as a means for conducting Quality Assurance monitoring. QA-specific software offers several advantages over manual methods, including assistance with calibration, automation of randomized sampling and specialized reporting that can assist in identifying root causes for common issues. The use of quality-specific software solutions has grown significantly two years in a row, moving from 25% use in 2017 to 36% use in 2019.

Which systems or tools do you use to conduct your Quality Assurance Program?

	2017	2018	2019
A Combination of Both Manual and Using Software	37%	29%	28%
Quality-Specific Software Solutions	25%	32%	36%
Manual (i.e., Excel)	38%	39%	36%

Which specific software solution(s) do you use for your quality program(s)?

Maestro   Custom
Avaya   Scorebuddy
RevealCX   Nexidia
Calabrio   Verint   NICE

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING, CONT.
Operational Insights — Monitoring, Measuring and Performance Improvement

If a QA program doesn't lead to improved resolution rates and, ultimately, an improved CSAT rate, the QA program is likely a failed investment. Fortunately, only 8% of 2019 survey respondents felt their QA programs were falling short in this regard. At the same time, 49% of respondents felt their QA programs were "Somewhat" successful at monitoring and improving resolution and CSAT rates, up 11 points year-over-year.

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Yes	38%	41%	49%	43%
No	9%	10%	13%	8%
Somewhat	53%	49%	38%	49%
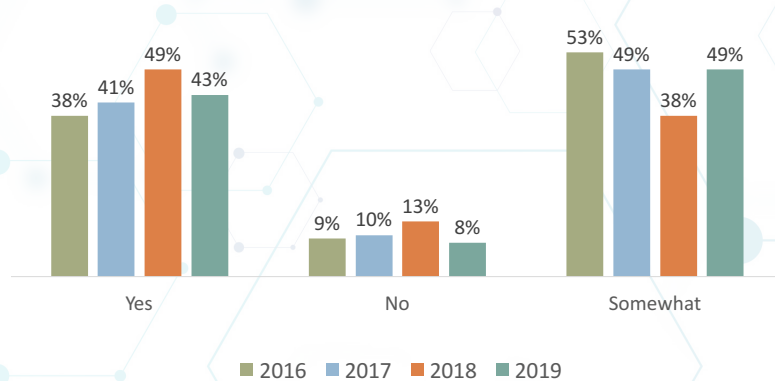
Are results from your Quality Assurance Program aligned with your CSAT results (i.e., as QA performance improves, CSAT results also improve)?

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Yes	59%	64%	60%	48%
No	28%	21%	24%	29%
Don't Know	13%	15%	16%	23%
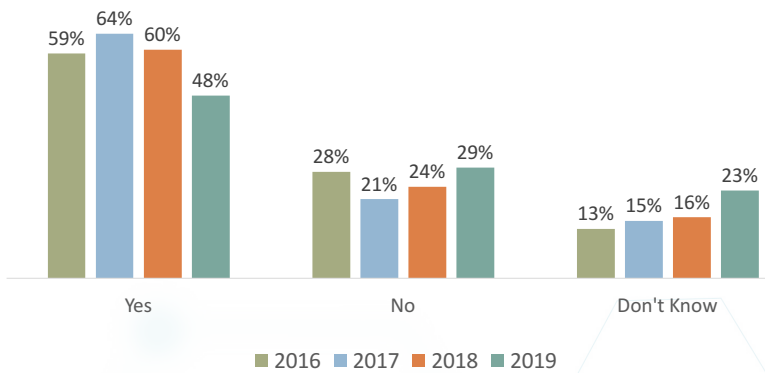
For QA programs that are correctly calibrated, there should be a definitive relationship between QA monitoring outcomes and CSAT. In other words, when QA scores improve, CSAT results also improve. This held true for only 48% of survey respondents in 2019, down from 60% in 2018. The upside of this result is the plain fact that many brands have an opportunity to improve the customer experience by making the necessary changes to their QA programs.

Are you utilizing your Quality Assurance Program to produce business intelligence for use throughout the organization?

	2017	2018	2019
Yes	41%	49%	65%
No	59%	51%	35%
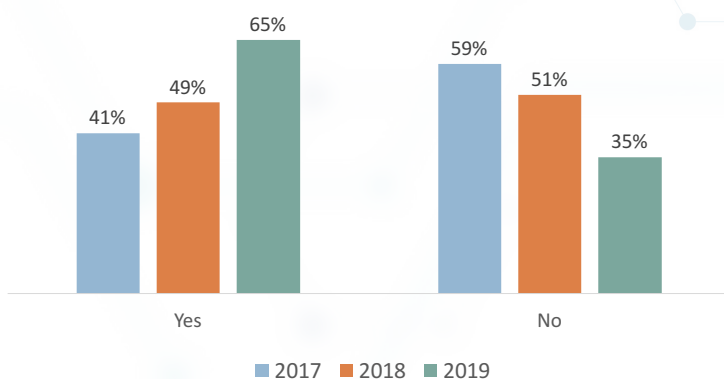
As highlighted on the previous page, QA programs can be an excellent source for valuable business intelligence. Because of this, it is reassuring to see the growth in the percentage of brands (at left) utilizing their QA programs for business intelligence. In 2019, almost two-thirds of survey participants indicated their QA programs were producing business intelligence for use throughout the organization, representing an almost 60% increase when compared to 2017 results.

CX
Staffing

HEADCOUNTS, HEADCOUNT GROWTH AND UNIVERSAL AGENTS
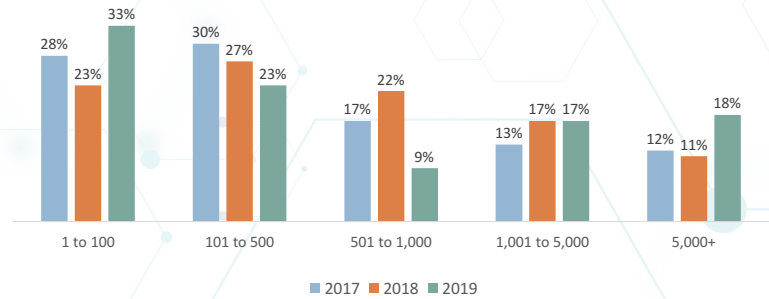
Operational Insights — Staffing

As outlined elsewhere in this report, the revenue profile of 2019 survey participants was lower than that of 2018 survey participants. Naturally, this fact skews several results in this report, particularly in the Staffing section. At right, we see the impact of a lower average revenue among survey respondents with a significant increase in the percentage of smaller programs with 1-100 FTEs, up 10 points year-over-year, as well as a decrease in mid-size programs of 501 to 1,000 FTEs, down 13 points year-over-year. More than anything else, these results work to describe the participants in this year's survey.

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

	1 to 100	101 to 500	501 to 1,000	1,001 to 5,000	5,000+
2017	28%	30%	17%	13%	12%
2018	23%	27%	22%	17%	11%
2019	33%	23%	9%	17%	18%

Perhaps also impacted by the lower revenue profile of 2019 survey respondents, headcount growth slowed year-over-year, with slightly less than half of respondents indicating an increase in contact center headcount over the previous 12 months. Even with the change, it is clear the contact center space continues to enjoy strong growth in terms of increasing staff counts.

Has your overall contact center organization headcount (both internal and external) increased or decreased over the past 12 months?

	Increased	Decreased	Remained the Same
2018	63%	22%	15%
2019	47%	22%	31%
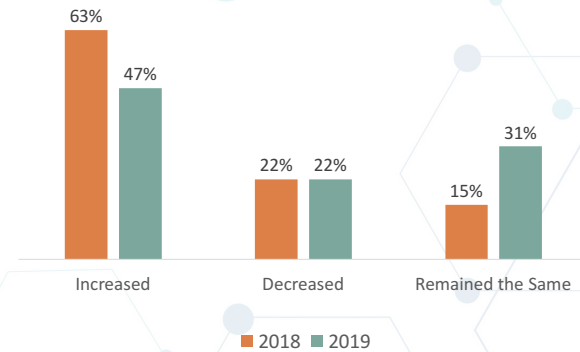
In an entirely new question for 2019, the CXMB Series survey asked participants about the deployment of universal agents; that is, agents capable of handling a wide variety of issues and engagement types. In year one of asking this question, slightly more than half (55%) of respondents indicated the availability of such agents. Universal agents can help create greater consistency across channels, while also boosting the resolution rates of alternative channels due to an enhanced skill set and greater empowerment.

> Does your organization deploy universal agents, agents who can handle virtually any type of issue/engagement that comes into your contact center?
>
> ## Yes: 55%

# INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL, COMMERCIAL MODELS AND GIG ECONOMY
Operational Insights — Staffing

Company employees continue to maintain a stout edge when it comes to engagement dispositioning counts. In 2019, 54% of survey respondents indicated the bulk of engagements were carried out by company employees, compared to only 37% indicating the same of outside providers.

Are the bulk of your customer care engagements carried out by company employees or an outside provider?
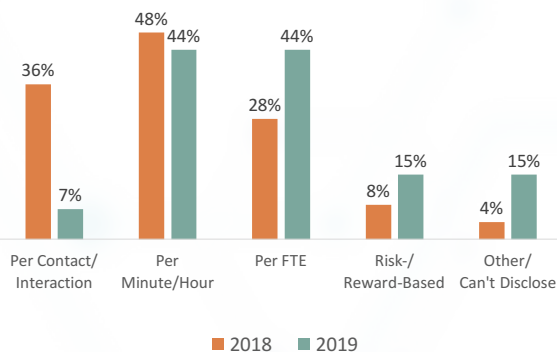
	Company Employees	Outside Provider	Even Mix
2016	55%	34%	11%
2017	65%	23%	12%
2018	44%	40%	16%
2019	54%	37%	9%
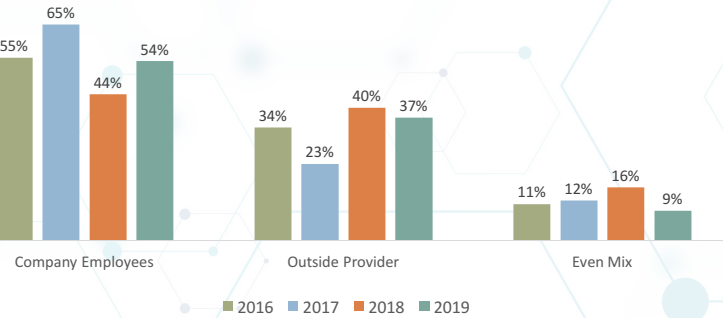
What percentage of your organization's contact center FTEs are internal versus external?

	Internal	External
2018	49%	51%
2019	54%	46%
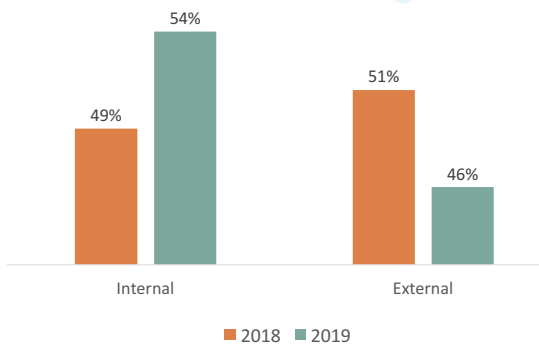
In the second year of asking the question (at left), the FTE mix continues to be a mostly even split between internal and external resources. While conventional wisdom would suggest internal resources do a better job of living and breathing the brand, external resources can also excel in this regard, assuming proper training, monitoring, coaching and a shared operational playbook.

"Per Minute/Hour" continues to lead the way as the most popular commercial model for outsourcing in 2019, at 44%, although this time around, it was joined by "Per FTE," also at 44%. In a new question (below, right) aimed at understanding the use of gig and brand advocate agents, 85% of survey respondents indicated they were not using either. Gig and brand advocate agents can be a cost-effective way to include performance-based resources in a program, and their use is sure to increase in the years to come.

What commercial model(s) do you use when outsourcing? (Check all that apply)

	Per Contact/ Interaction	Per Minute/Hour	Per FTE	Risk-/ Reward-Based	Other/ Can't Disclose
2018	36%	48%	28%	8%	4%
2019	7%	44%	44%	15%	15%

Does your organization utilize either gig or brand advocate agents for issue resolution?

- Brand Advocate Agents 7%
- Gig Agents 4%
- Both Gig and Brand Advocate Agents 4%
- Neither 85%
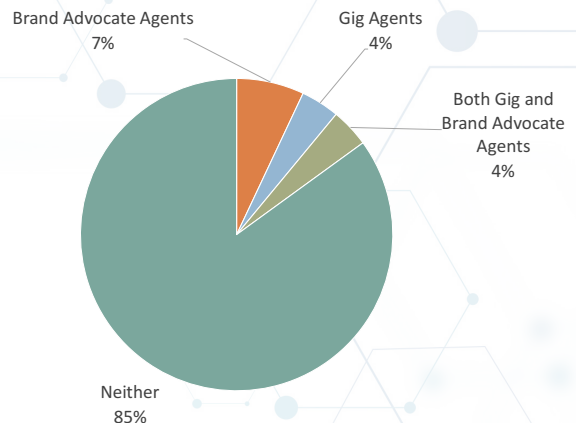
HIRING REQUIREMENTS AND MULTICHANNEL SUPPORT
Operational Insights — Staffing

A little more than a third of survey respondents indicated their hiring requirements had changed in a significant way in the previous 12 months, consistent with prior years. Among the changes indicated: improved critical thinking skills, better writing skills (for chat and social media), hiring of more mature, more experienced agents and more stringent hiring assessments.

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

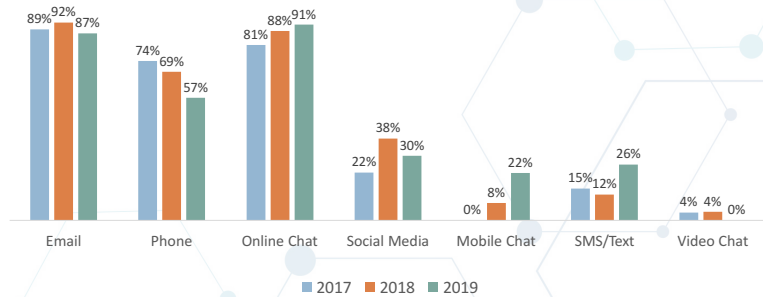|	Yes	No	Don't Know
2016	31%	64%	5%
2017	37%	60%	3%
2018	36%	60%	4%
2019	37%	57%	6%
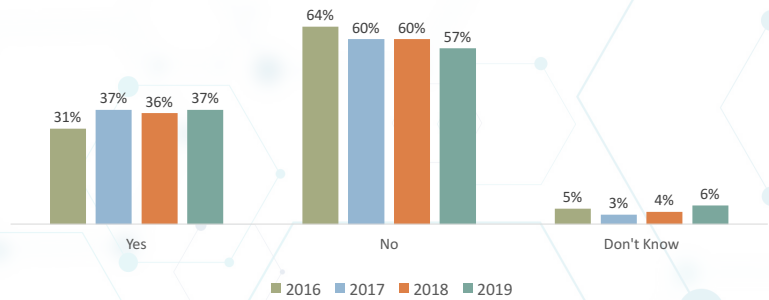
Similar to universal agents (page 35), about half of all survey respondents indicated their organizations deploy agents who provide care via multiple channels and/or solutions simultaneously. Typically, online chat is one of the most commonly paired-up solutions, with agents simultaneously providing support via online chat, as well as email, phone and even social media. This requires agents with superb multitasking and communication skills, as well as the ability to handle the various issue types that typically come through the different solution types.

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

2019 — Yes: 46%
2018 — Yes: 58%
2017 — Yes: 54%
2016 — Yes: 46%

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
2017	89%	74%	81%	22%	0%	15%	4%
2018	92%	69%	88%	38%	8%	12%	4%
2019	87%	57%	91%	30%	22%	26%	0%

Twenty-five percent was the average of all responses given when survey participants were asked to estimate the percentage of interactions occurring across multiple channels. In results from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 63% of consumers indicated they had used more than one channel to resolve a single customer care issue within the previous 12 months, indicating widespread use of the multichannel approach to resolving issues.

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

2019 — 25%
2018 — 31%
2017 — 30%
2016 — 31%
2015 — 28%

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TOPICS OF INTEREST
Operational Insights — Staffing

In response to a question that has roots dating back to the launch of the CXMB Series in 2012, survey participants touched on a wide range of topics with no clear-cut themes rising to the top. Interest in developing more knowledge about technology (especially AI) was present, as always. Channel development, particularly outside of Traditional Care, was also mentioned several times, as well as omnichannel strategy and deployment. Finally, there was considerable interest in hiring, employee development and the gig economy.

Below is a sampling of some of the responses to the question below:

As a customer experience professional, on which topics would you like more education and development?

"Creative hiring initiatives."

"Being able to take advantage of new technology on a budget."

"Customer channels other than Traditional Care."

"Development of a technology road map for seamless omnichannel experiences."

"Ways to elevate the awareness/importance of CX throughout the organization."

"How customer feedback can be integrated with and more easily utilized by operations teams."

"How to create a holistic approach to the customer journey."

"How to increase productivity without increasing staffing."

"Integrating AI with proof of performance — it works and consumers like it or are neutral."

"Maturing non-Traditional Care channels to provide improved CX in all channels."

"Omnichannel strategies."

"Providing best-in-class self-help tools for customers."

CX
## Technology

CRM AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
Operational Insights — Technology

Use of a shared CRM system continued to grow in popularity year-over-year, with 61% of this year's survey respondents indicating the use of such a CRM system at their organization. Centralized and accessible contact information is an important first step toward providing customers with an omnichannel service experience.

Does your organization utilize a shared CRM system that combines information from all contact channels?

2019 — Yes: 61%
2018 — Yes: 56%
2017 — Yes: 50%
2016 — Yes: 49%
2015 — Yes: 49%

Which CRM system does your organization use?
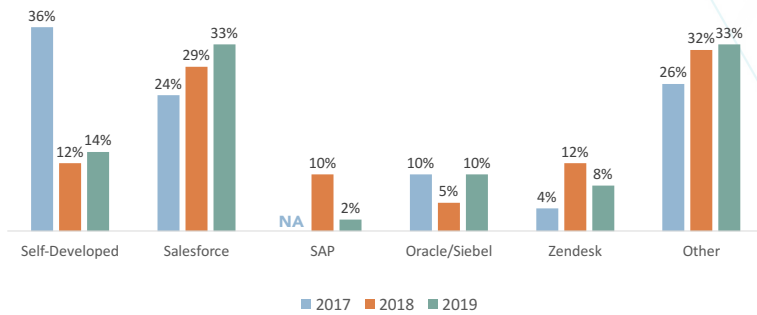
Outside of Salesforce, which remains a popular name among CRM solutions, the field was diverse when participants were asked about which CRM systems they use. Within the ever-large "Other" pool, products mentioned include Microsoft Dynamics 365, Genesys, NetSuite and Gladly.

After a staggering ramp up from 2016 to 2017, interest in chatbots not only remains strong, but continues to grow. In 2019, more than half of all respondents (52%) indicated chatbots as the single technology of most interest and/or investment, followed distantly by Text/Speech Analytics. As shown on the following page, in 2019, 35% of survey respondents indicated their organization had deployed AI in some capacity, with 77% indicating a consumer-facing application. It's likely that the majority of these applications are, in fact, chatbots.

Which of these emerging technologies is your organization most interested and/or invested in?
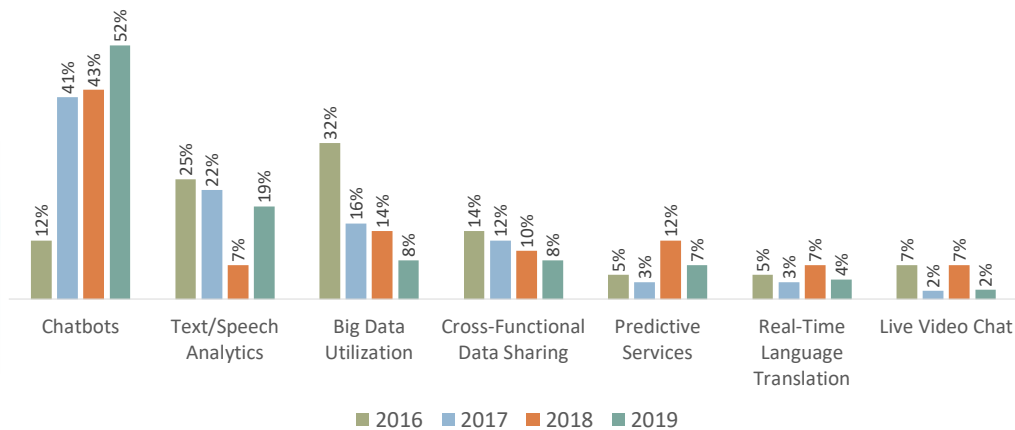
AI AND CUSTOMER CARE
Operational Insights — Technology

Interest in and use of AI continues to grow within the industry. Year-over-year, there was a 5-point rise (a 17% increase) in the percentage of survey respondents indicating the use of AI within their customer care business. AI is mostly commonly used in self-service tools (chatbots) for task automation and to help customer care agents assist customers quicker and more accurately.

Has your company applied the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within your customer care business?
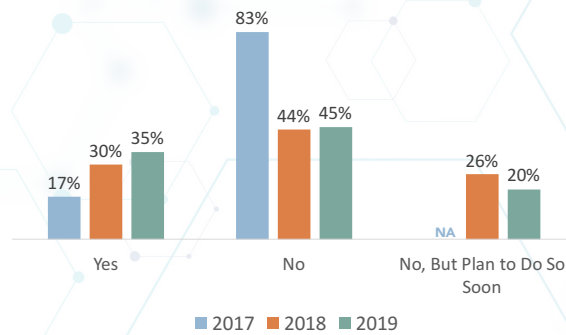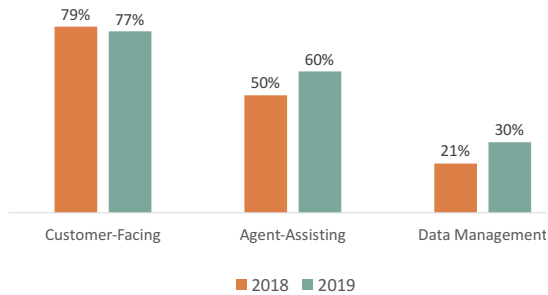

	Yes	No	No, But Plan to Do So Soon
2017	17%	83%	NA
2018	30%	44%	26%
2019	35%	45%	20%

How would you describe the specific current or upcoming application(s) of your AI-powered solution(s)? (Check all that apply)

	Customer-Facing	Agent-Assisting	Data Management
2018	79%	50%	21%
2019	77%	60%	30%

When survey respondents were asked to describe how they are applying current or future AI-powered solutions, consumer-facing solutions continue to be the most popular, but agent-assisting solutions made large strides in 2019, increasing by 10 points year-over-year. Use of AI for data management also leapt forward in 2019, adding 9 points, an increase of 43%.

Which objectives are you primarily trying to accomplish with your use or future use of AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply)

Create Operational Efficiencies	Improve the Customer Experience	Reduce Costs	Reduce Assisted Engagement Volumes	Improve Agent Performance	Fraud Detection Security
83%	73%	70%	70%	57%	20%
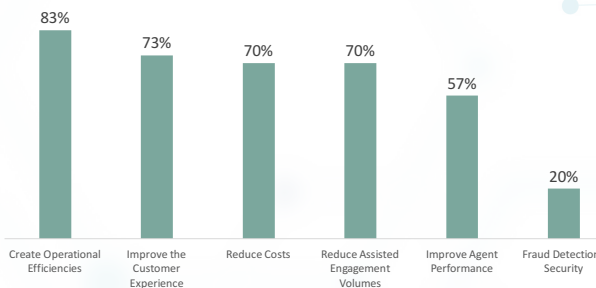
In an entirely new question for 2019, survey respondents were asked to name the types of objectives they are trying to accomplish with AI-powered solutions. "Create Operational Efficiencies" topped the list at 83%, closely followed by this trio of objectives: "Improve the Customer Experience" (73%), "Reduce Costs" (70%) and "Reduce Assisted Engagement Volumes" (70%).

While many brands might adopt AI-powered solutions with the intent of improving the customer care experience, many consumers see things differently. For insight into their perspective, check out the Consumer Edition Comparisons section on page 74.

FUTURE PURSUITS, QUALITY MONITORING
AND AI-POWERED RESOLUTION RATES
Operational Insights — Technology

What types of AI applications is your company specifically interested in pursuing in the future? (Select all that apply)

Chatbots: 80% (2018), 84% (2019)
Intelligent Automation: 56% (2018), 75% (2019)
Generation of Customer Insights: 49% (2018), 55% (2019)
Predictive Analytics: 51% (2018), 47% (2019)
Security/Fraud/Threat Detection: 41% (2018), 27% (2019)
Social Media Monitoring/Engagement: 44% (2018), 20% (2019)

■ 2018 ■ 2019
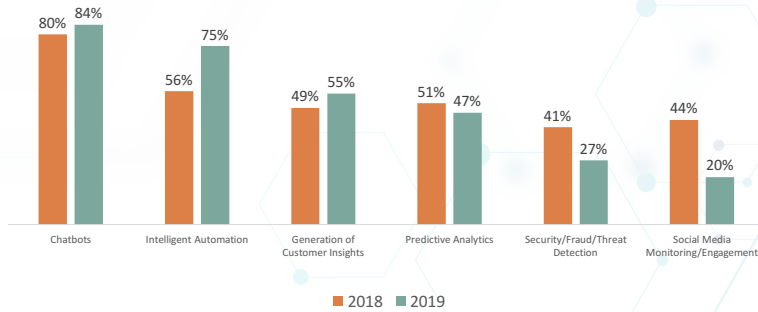
While interest in chatbots remained consistent year-over-year, the same can't be said of Intelligent Automation, which saw a massive increase in interest from 2018 to 2019, moving from 56% to 75%. At the same time, interest waned for AI application in the areas of Security/Fraud/Threat Detection and Social Media Monitoring/Engagement.

In the second year of asking the question at right, there was no change in the percentage of brand-measuring quality for their AI-powered, c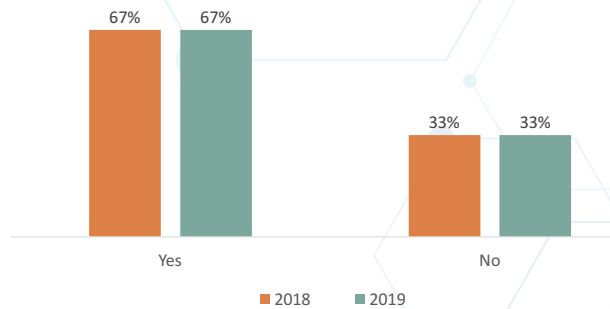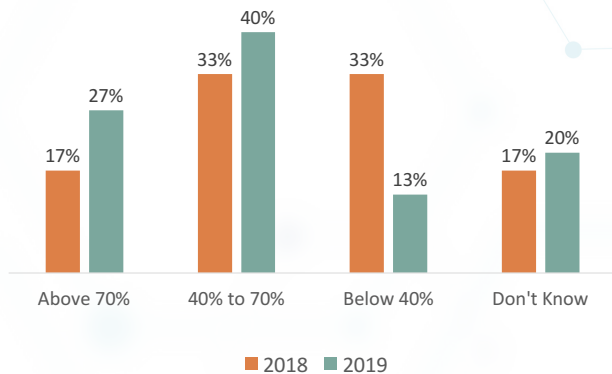ustomer-facing solution(s). Given the mixed reviews of consumers for AI-powered solutions, brands owe it to themselves and their customers to ensure chatbots and other AI-powered solutions are performing as expected. One of the ways to do this is through a comprehensive quality-monitoring approach.

Are you measuring quality for your AI-powered, customer-facing solution(s)?

Yes: 67% (2018), 67% (2019)
No: 33% (2018), 33% (2019)

■ 2018 ■ 2019

What is your resolution rate for AI-powered, customer-facing solution(s)?

Above 70%: 17% (2018), 27% (2019)
40% to 70%: 33% (2018), 40% (2019)
Below 40%: 33% (2018), 13% (2019)
Don't Know: 17% (2018), 20% (2019)

■ 2018 ■ 2019

Resolution rates for AI-powered, customer-facing solutions surged in 2019, with double-digit gains (10 points) in the percentage of brands reporting a resolution rate of 70% or greater. At the same time, the percentage of brands reporting a resolution rate of 40% or less fell a full 20 points. This is great news for consumers, many of whom are not entirely sold on AI-powered solutions. As resolution rates increase, adoption and acceptance of AI-powered solutions will surely improve among consumers.

AI DEVELOPMENT AND CONSUMER NAVIGATION OF SOLUTIONS
Operational Insights — Technology

Are you developing your AI solutions in-house, with the help of a third-party, or are you using third-party tools?

- With the Help of a Third Party: 56% (2018), 45% (2019)
- In-House: 26% (2018), 35% (2019)
- Currently Using Third-Party Tools: 18% (2018), 19% (2019)

2018 ■ 2019
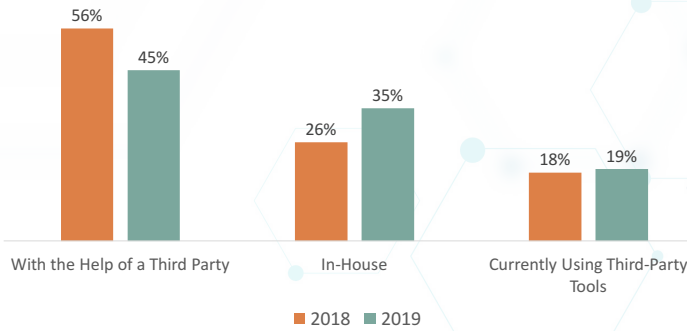
In the second year of asking the question at left, there was a measurable increase in the percentage of brands developing AI solutions "In-House," moving from 26% to 35%. Most of this increase came as the result of a decline in the percentage of brands that are developing AI solutions "With the Help of a Third Party," which slipped from 56% down to 45%. Taken together, these results show reliance upon a third party is still the most common path for development of AI solutions, but In-House development is making strong gains.

Although the number slipped year-over-year, most brands participating in this year's survey (60%) have in-house data science resources. Data science is a critical area for the development of data analytics (text/voice) and AI solutions. As companies consider where to make investments, data science resources are worth serious consideration, especially for brands that hope to develop, deploy or even lead the way when it comes to Robotic Process Automation, data analytics and AI-powered solutions.

Does your organization have in-house data science resources?

- Yes: 74% (2018), 60% (2019)
- No: 26% (2018), 40% (2019)

2018 ■ 2019
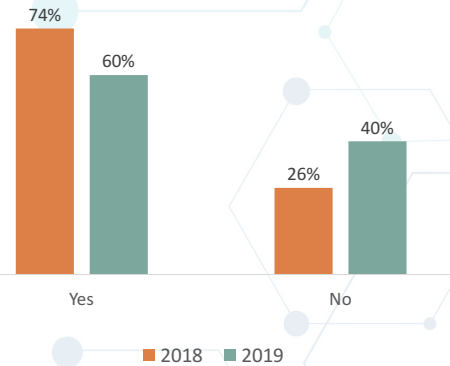
Does your organization provide a clear and easy process for customers to navigate out of an AI-powered solution and connect with a live person?

- Yes: 91% (2018), 85% (2019)
- No: 9% (2018), 15% (2019)

2018 ■ 2019
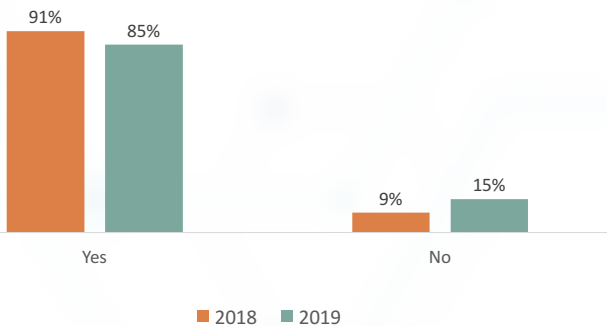
Beginning in 2018, the CXMB Series Consumer Edition survey took a major dive into the topic of AI and AI-powered solutions. From the onset, consumers have voiced concern about choice and accessibility to live agents. Given this fact, it's reassuring to see such a large percentage of brands (85%) offer a clear and easy process for reaching a live person. Until AI-powered solutions can achieve much higher resolution and CSAT results, the convenience of such features will continue to be highly valued by consumers.

AI BUDGETING
Operational Insights — Technology

Among brands with an existing or soon-to-be-released AI-powered solution, there was little change in the percentage that maintain a dedicated budget allocation for such solutions. Interestingly, although there was little change in the percentage of companies with dedicated dollars, there was a major change in the amount of dollars being allocated. In 2018, when the question of dedicated budgets was first asked, the average budget allocation among respondents equaled 6%. In 2019, the average budget allocation more than doubled, increasing to 14%. Clearly, for brands already involved in developing AI-powered solutions, investment and commitment to the technology is increasing at a very rapid pace.

Is there a certain percentage
of your customer care budget that you
are allocating to AI-powered solutions?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2018	20%	62%	18%
2019	22%	69%	9%

■ 2018 ■ 2019
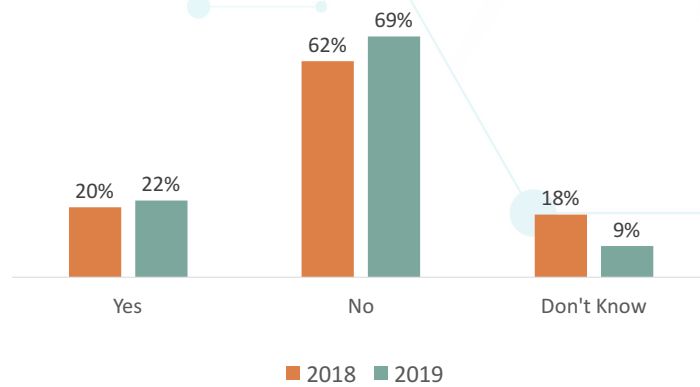
Average percentage of customer care budget
allocated toward AI-powered solutions.

2019 — 14%
2018 — 6%

OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

• When asked what percentage of customer care engagements were occurring within each channel, 62% was the average response given for Traditional Care — the lowest average in 6 years of data (page 24)

• 65% of survey respondents indicated they were using their Quality Assurance Program to produce business intelligence for use throughout their organization, up from 41% in 2017 (page 33)

• The reported resolution rate for AI-powered solutions showed a dramatic increase year-over-year, with 27% of respondents indicating a resolution rate of 70% or better in 2019, up from 17% of respondents in 2018 (page 42)

As indicated in both this report and in the CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, customer engagements have, for a long time now, been migrating away from Traditional Care and into alternative care channels. That's not to say Traditional Care isn't still growing, but the pace of growth among alternative channels of care is far more robust then the growth seen in Traditional Care. As this migration continues, brands will need to ensure they deliver the same level of ease and effectiveness across channels and solutions, meeting the expectation set by Traditional Care. This is particularly true as more traffic moves from human-to-human interactions to automated transactions (page 25).

To understand the performance of solutions like chatbots, brands will need to consider new and novel approaches to monitoring and gathering consumer feedback. Currently, only 67% of brands apply Quality Assurance monitoring to their AI-powered solutions (page 42), and only 65% of these brands are using such QA programs to produce business intelligence. These numbers will need to increase if brands hope to increase resolution rates and create an exceptional customer experience across the breadth of their channels and solutions.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

As engagements migrate away from Traditional Care, are we ensuring we are monitoring for quality and performance within alternative channels in the same way we had for our Traditional Care channel?

Does our Quality Assurance program add value not just to our customer care program, but also to the wider organization through the identification and dissemination of critical business intelligence?

As we release new tech-driven care solutions, such as AI-powered chatbots, are we making sure the capabilities and usability of such tools are meeting the expectations of our customers?

CX

Channel
Results

- ⬡ Traditional Care
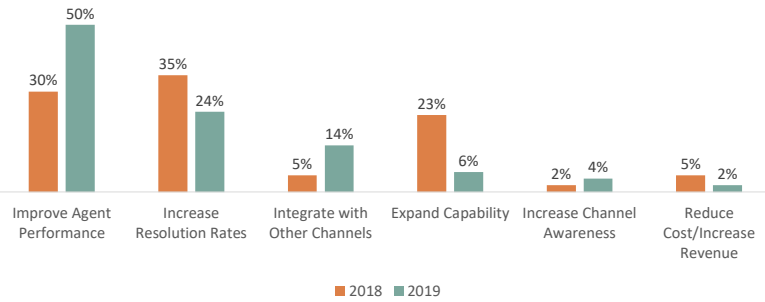- ⬡ Interactive Care
- ⬡ Social Media Care
- ⬡ Mobile Care
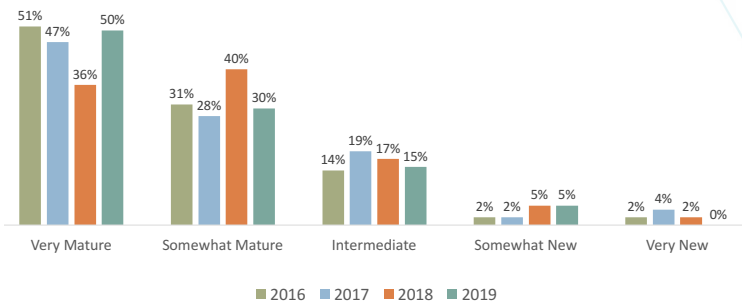
CX
Traditional Care

PRIORITIES, MATURITY AND TRAFFIC
Channel Results — Traditional Care

Traditional Care priorities shifted significantly year-over-year, with much greater emphasis on improving agent performance and channel integration. At the same time, survey respondents pulled back on prioritizing increased resolution rates and expanded channel capabilities. It could be the case that brands are strategizing that they can tackle things like issue resolution and channel capability by improving the performance of agents.

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

	Improve Agent Performance	Increase Resolution Rates	Integrate with Other Channels	Expand Capability	Increase Channel Awareness	Reduce Cost/Increase Revenue
2018	30%	35%	5%	23%	2%	5%
2019	50%	24%	14%	6%	4%	2%

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

	Very Mature	Somewhat Mature	Intermediate	Somewhat New	Very New
2016	51%	31%	14%	2%	2%
2017	47%	28%	19%	2%	4%
2018	36%	40%	17%	5%	2%
2019	50%	30%	15%	5%	0%

When it comes to the Traditional Care channel, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents (80%) consider their organizations to be "Very Mature" or "Somewhat Mature." To put this number in context, here is the combined "Very Mature" and "Somewhat Mature" results for all channels of care:

Traditional Care: 80%
Social Media Care: 34%
Interactive Care: 25%
Mobile Care: 17%

Traffic volumes for the Traditional Care channel, as well as individual Traditional Care channel solutions, fit familiar patterns. On the whole, increases outshone decreases, with solution increases traceable to two specific solutions: Phone and Email. For both postal Mail and In-Person traffic volumes, decreases outstripped increases, which has been a common result over the past several years. And, while Traditional Care still appears to be growing, its rate of growth pales when compared to the rapid increases in alternative care channels.

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

	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016	37%	30%	31%	2%
2017	34%	30%	34%	2%
2018	47%	30%	21%	2%
2019	40%	30%	28%	2%

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

	Phone	Email	Mail	In-Person
Increased	42%	42%	0%	25%
Decreased	22%	33%	45%	33%
Same	36%	25%	55%	42%
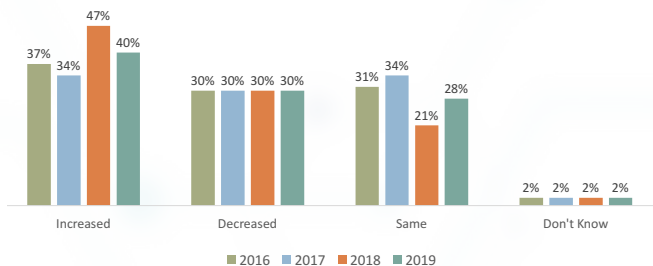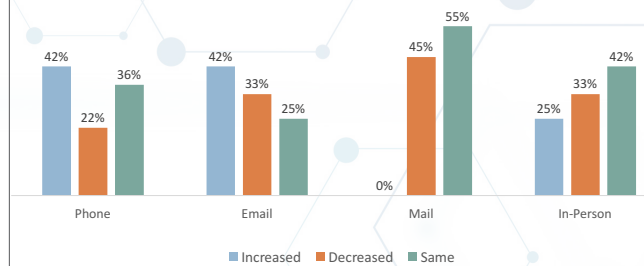
STAFFING AND STAFFING CHANGES
Channel Results — Traditional Care

In year two of asking the question at right, changes to the staffing mix of Traditional Care channels were muted year-over-year. Traditional Care continues to be mostly staffed internally with onshore resources. When it comes to external resources, location continues to be almost a perfect three-way split between onshore, offshore and nearshore resources.

How is your Traditional Care channel (phone, email, etc.) primarily staffed? (Check all that apply)
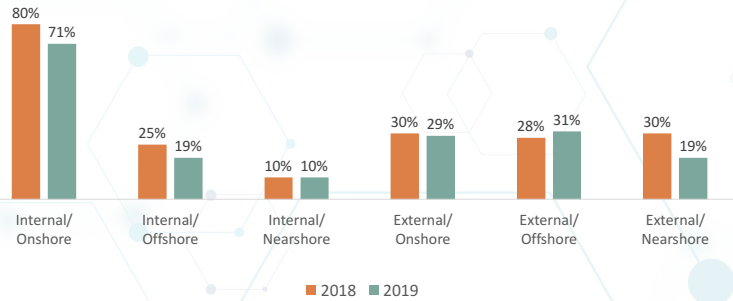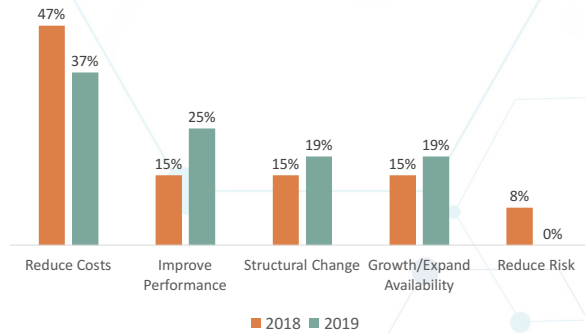
	2018	2019
Internal/Onshore	80%	71%
Internal/Offshore	25%	19%
Internal/Nearshore	10%	10%
External/Onshore	30%	29%
External/Offshore	28%	31%
External/Nearshore	30%	19%

Has the staffing of your company's Traditional Care channel changed in a significant way over the past 24 months?

2019 — Yes: 31%
2018 — Yes: 32%
2017 — Yes: 36%
2016 — Yes: 33%

What are the primary drivers of this change?

	2018	2019
Reduce Costs	47%	37%
Improve Performance	15%	25%
Structural Change	15%	19%
Growth/Expand Availability	15%	19%
Reduce Risk	8%	0%

Similar to all previous data points, about one-third (31%) of survey respondents indicated significant change in the staffing of their Traditional Care channel in the past two years. Reducing costs continues to be the most prominent driver of change, followed closely by performance improvement. When the 31% were asked to expand upon said change (below), "Work From Home" saw strong gains, and Outsourcing continues to outpace Insourcing. Finally, "Gig Economy" was added as an option for the first time in 2019, with an increase being claimed by 19% of respondents.

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

	2018 Increased	2018 Decreased	2019 Increased	2019 Decreased
FTEs	42%	17%	38%	38%
Work From Home	25%	8%	31%	6%
Gig Economy	NA	NA	19%	6%
Insourcing	17%	8%	6%	19%
Outsourcing	33%	8%	31%	13%
Offshoring	8%	17%	13%	13%
Onshoring	8%	17%	6%	25%
Nearshoring	33%	8%	19%	13%
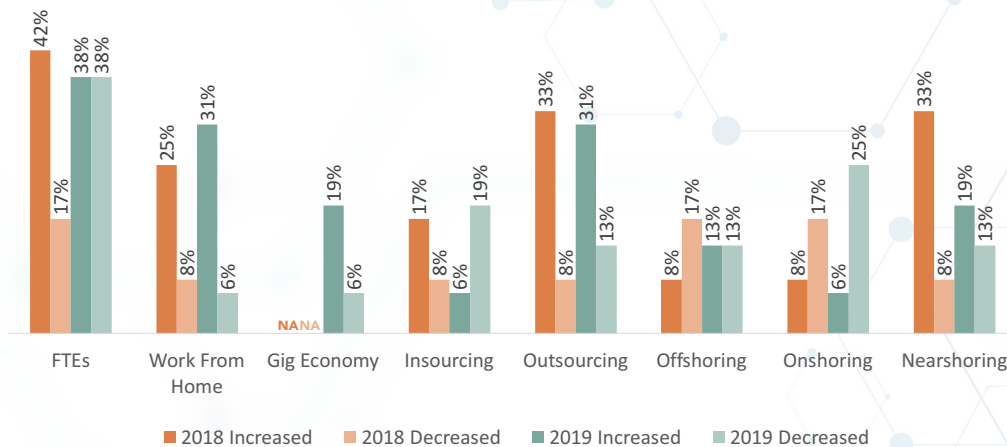
CX

Interactive Care

CHANNEL/SOLUTION AVAILABILITY AND TRAFFIC CHANGES
Channel Results — Interactive Care

Although by a small margin, 2019 results saw more companies offering Interactive Care support than any year prior. As self-help solutions continue to evolve and become less expensive (think chatbots), this number is sure to continue increasing, just as it has in each of the previous three years.

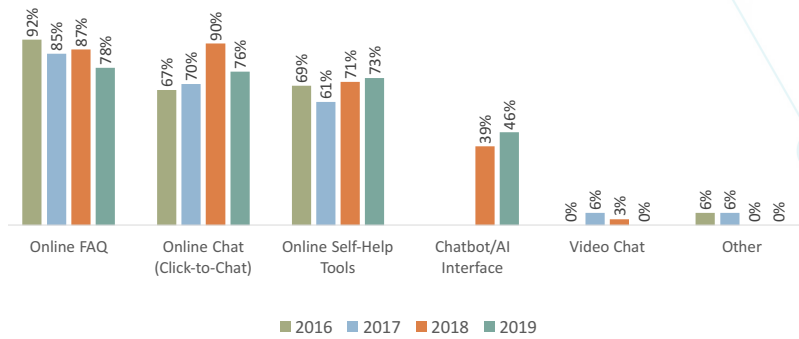**Does your company provide Interactive Care support, including online/video chat, FAQ and self-help tools?**

2019 — Yes: 77%
2018 — Yes: 76%
2017 — Yes: 72%
2016 — Yes: 67%

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

Among Interactive Care solutions on offer, Online FAQ, Online Chat and Online Self-Help Tools are evenly offered across organizations. After being added to the mix in 2018, 46% of respondents indicated that they were currently offering a chatbot solution in 2019.

Unlike Traditional Care, where the data suggests modest growth, survey respondents continue to indicate robust growth for Interactive Care. In 2019, 63% of respondents said they experienced increased traffic in the past year, with no respondents indicating a decrease in traffic for Interactive Care. Similarly, traffic was up strongly for every Interactive Care solution (below, right), with Online Chat leading the way.
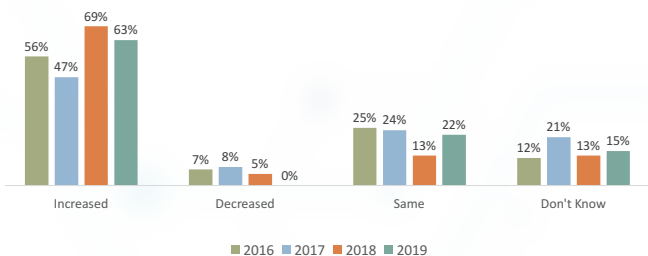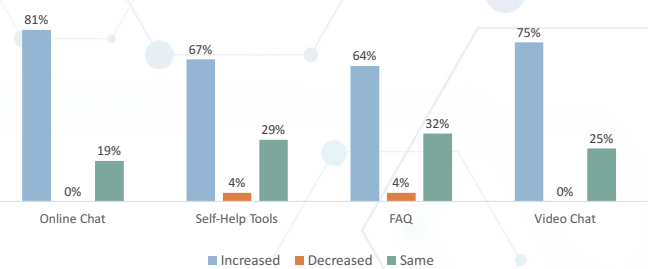
PRIORITIES, MATURITY AND EXPANSION
Channel Results — Interactive Care

Mirroring Traditional Care priorities (page 48), Interactive Care priorities saw substantial shifts year-over-year. Compared to 2018, there is significantly less focus on expanding channel capabilities, combined with much greater emphasis on increasing resolution rates and integrating Interactive Care with other channels.

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

Category	2018	2019
Expand Capability	59%	36%
Increase Resolution Rates	22%	30%
Integrate with Other Channels	7%	20%
Improve Agent Performance	10%	5%
Increase Channel Awareness	2%	5%
Reduce Cost/Increase Revenue	0%	5%

What is your organization's level of maturity within the Interactive Care channel?
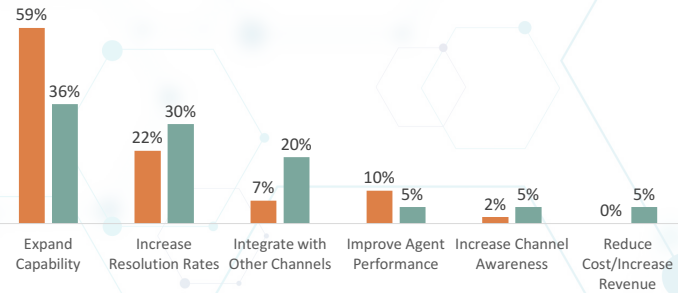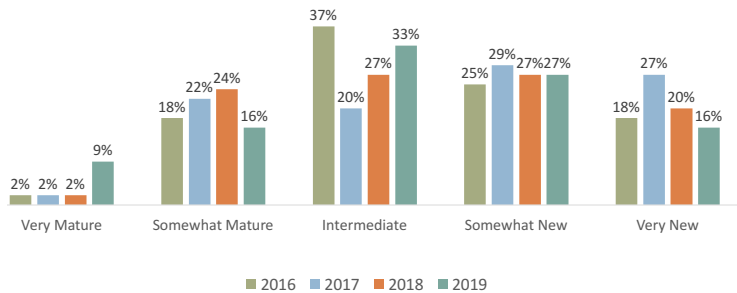
Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
Very Mature	2%	2%	2%	9%
Somewhat Mature	18%	22%	24%	16%
Intermediate	37%	20%	27%	33%
Somewhat New	25%	29%	27%	27%
Very New	18%	27%	20%	16%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

Accounting for the increase in brands responding, "Very Mature" and the decrease in brands claiming, "Somewhat Mature," changes in the maturity level for the Interactive Care channel were essentially a wash year-over-year. That said, the overall maturity of the Interactive Care channel is on the low end when compared to other channels of care. For context, below is the combined "Very Mature" and "Somewhat Mature" results for all channels:

Interactive Care: 25%
Traditional Care: 80%
Social Media Care: 34%
Mobile Care: 17%

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

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
A Top Priority	12%	13.5%	19%	10%
As Important or More Important Than Other Expansions	31%	22%	37%	40%
Somewhat Important	44%	51%	39%	40%
Not Important	13%	13.5%	5%	10%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019
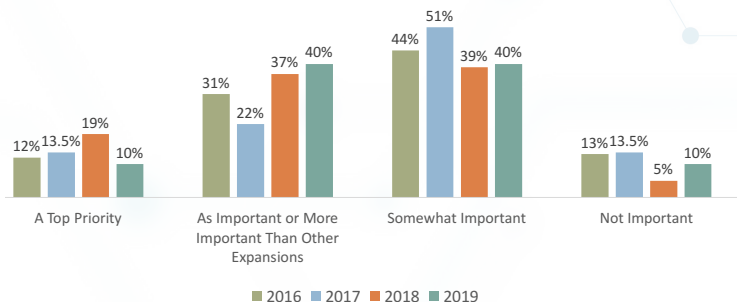
The importance of expanding and/or developing an Interactive Care channel slipped noticeably year-over-year. In 2018, nearly 20% of respondents described the development/expansion of Interactive Care as "A Top Priority." In 2019, this result was nearly halved, at 10%. At the same time, there was a doubling of the percentage of respondents who answered, "Not Important" to the question at left.

CHANNEL STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIME
Channel Results — Interactive Care

Staffing for the Interactive Care channel was mostly consistent year-over-year. "Internal/Onshore" continues to be the most common staffing arrangement, followed by "External/Offshor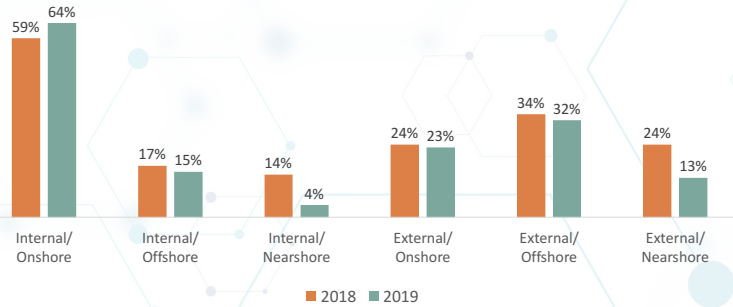e." The majority of respondents selected two or more staffing arrangements, indicating the diverse nature of staffing within the industry.

How is your Interactive Care channel (chat, video chat, etc.) primarily staffed? (Select all that apply)

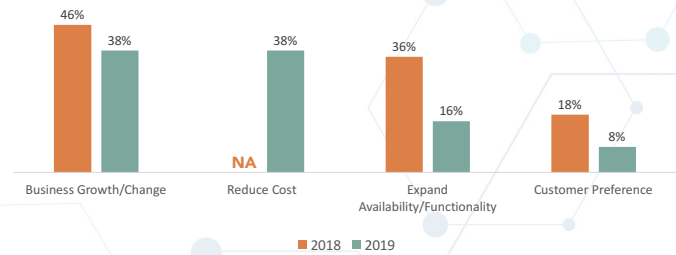|	2018	2019
Internal/Onshore	59%	64%
Internal/Offshore	17%	15%
Internal/Nearshore	14%	4%
External/Onshore	24%	23%
External/Offshore	34%	32%
External/Nearshore	24%	13%

Consistent with results from 2016-2018, about a third of survey respondents indicated significant staffing changes within their Interactive Care channel over the past 24 months (below, left). And, while the prevalence of change was consistent, the driver of the change (below, right) was not. In this year's results, greater attention was paid to reducing costs, which was entirely absent in 2018. All other drivers of change were also deemphasized, particularly in the area of expanded availability and functionality for the Interactive Care channel.

Has the staffing of your company's Interactive Care channel changed in a significant way over the past 24 months?

2019 — Yes: 33%
2018 — Yes: 31%
2017 — Yes: 32%
2016 — Yes: 29%
2015 — Yes: 38%

What are the primary drivers of this change (e.g. to reduce costs, geopolitical concerns, expanded hours of operation, etc.)?

	2018	2019
Business Growth/Change	46%	38%
Reduce Cost	NA	38%
Expand Availability/Functionality	36%	16%
Customer Preference	18%	8%

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

	2018 Increased	2018 Decreased	2019 Increased	2019 Decreased
FTEs	82%	9%	62%	0%
Work From Home	18%	18%	23%	8%
Insourcing	18%	9%	8%	8%
Outsourcing	18%	9%	38%	0%
Offshoring	9%	9%	31%	0%
Onshoring	0%	18%	8%	8%
Nearshoring	18%	18%	15%	0%
Gig Economy	NA	NA	8%	0%
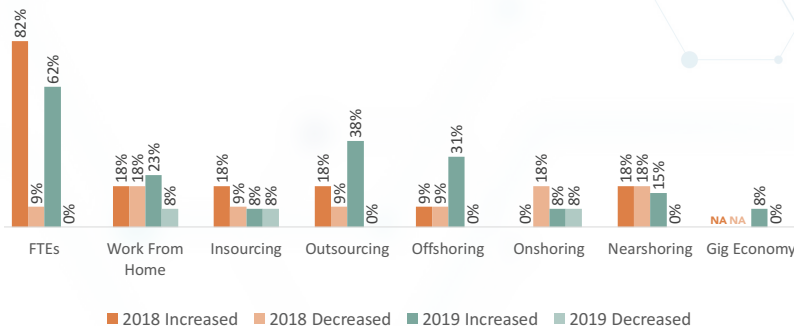
When survey respondents were asked to describe the specific areas where staffing has changed, there was a measurable year-over-year increase in Outsourcing and Offshoring activities. Sixty-two percent of respondents also indicated an increase in FTEs in 2019, down 20 points from 2018 results — though not a single respondent indicated a decrease in FTEs for the Interactive Care channel in 2019. Strong growth is still the dominate theme for the Interactive Care channel.

CHANNEL STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIME
Channel Results — Interactive Care

Response time and speed of resolution continue to be important factors for consumers when working with a brand to resolve a customer care issue. This holds true whether consumers are attempting to resolve an issue via phone or an Interactive Care solution, such as online chat. In 2019, there was a 21-point reduction in the percentage of businesses that, on average, respond in 10 minutes or less via an Interactive Care solution. To put the consumer's desire for speed into context, in the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition, 20% of consumers who were prescreened as users of Interactive Care solutions named "Getting a Fast Response" as the most important characteristic of their interaction with customer care in the pursuit of resolving an issue.

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

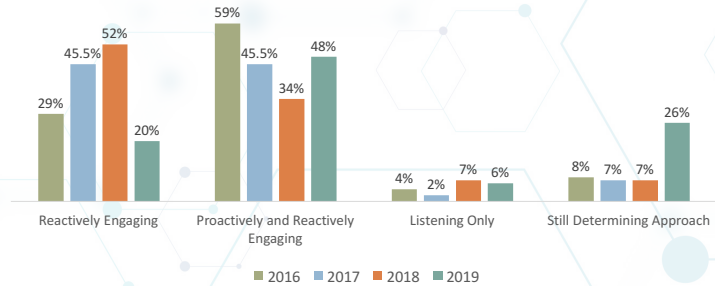|	Less Than 10 Minutes	10 to 30 Minutes	30 Minutes to an Hour	1 to 4 Hours	4 to 8 Hours	More Than 8 Hours	Don't Know
2016	59%	8%	13%	5%	5%	2%	8%
2017	51%	9%	6%	14%	9%	0%	11%
2018	79%	8%	0%	0%	0%	3%	10%
2019	58%	9%	9%	5%	2%	7%	10%
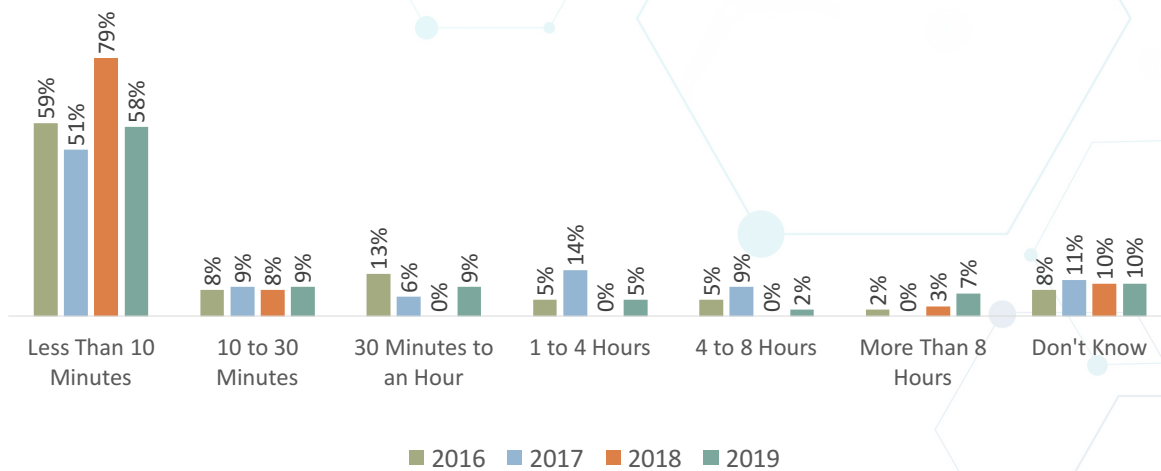
CX

Social
Media
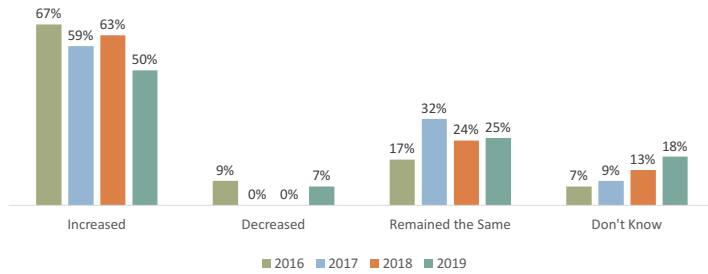# Care

APPROACH, PLATFORM PRESENCE AND VOLUME CHANGES
Channel Results — Social Media Care

After several years of expansion in the percentage of brands taking a reactive approach to social media, the tide shifted in 2019 with a 32-point drop year-over-year. At the same time, there was a 14-point lift in the percentage of brands taking both a reactive and proactive approach to social media. This is great news for consumers, as a proactive approach to social media not only encourages increased rates of resolution, it also demonstrates that a brand is listening to its customers and truly cares about resolving issues and doing what is in the best interest of its customers.

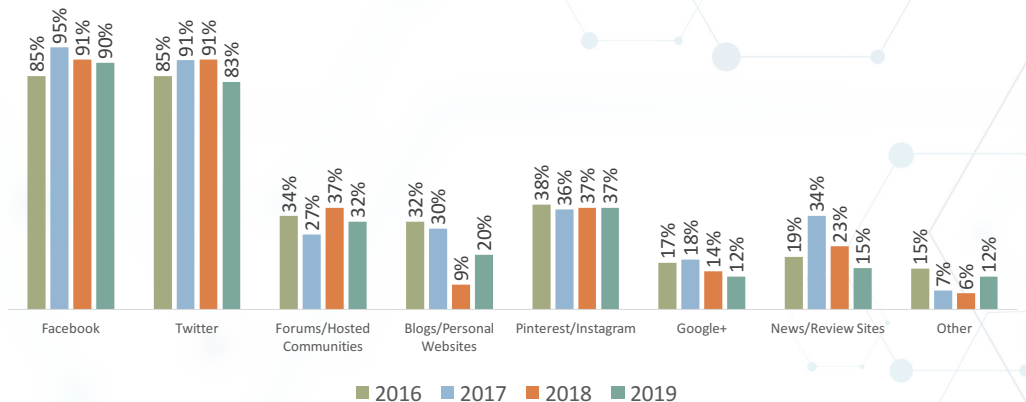**How would you describe your company's overall approach to social media?**

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reactively Engaging	29%	45.5%	52%	20%
Proactively and Reactively Engaging	59%	45.5%	34%	48%
Listening Only	4%	2%	7%	6%
Still Determining Approach	8%	7%	7%	26%

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

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019
Increased	67%	59%	63%	50%
Decreased	9%	0%	0%	7%
Remained the Same	17%	32%	24%	25%
Don't Know	7%	9%	13%	18%

CXMB Series data continues to suggest slowing volume growth for the Social Media Care channel. Among 2016 survey participants, 67% indicated an increase in channel traffic over the previous year. Conversely, in 2019, only 50% of survey respondents indicated the same. Furthermore, "Decreased" responses were also registered — the first time since 2016 — with 7% of 2019 respondents noting a decrease in Social Media Care volumes over the previous year.

Results denoting brand participation across social media platforms remained mostly consistent year-over-year. Twitter slipped slightly in 2019, allowing Facebook to lay claim to the top spot. Blogs/Personal Websites also popped back up after a steep decline in 2018, while New/Review Sites confirmed a downward trend beginning in 2017. Among the platforms specifically named in "Other": LinkedIn, YouTube, WeChat and Weibo.

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

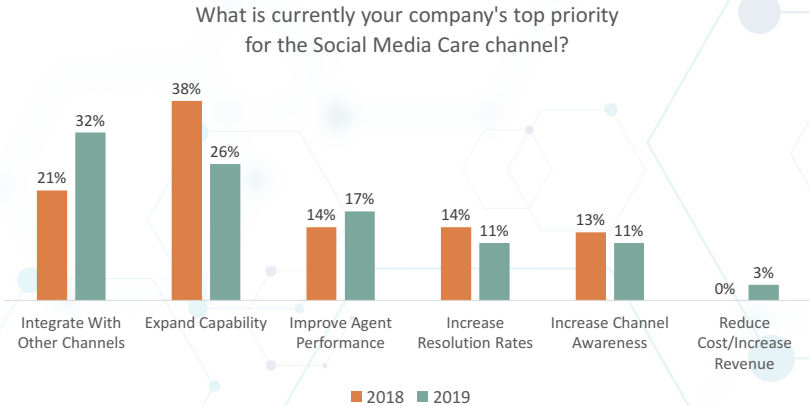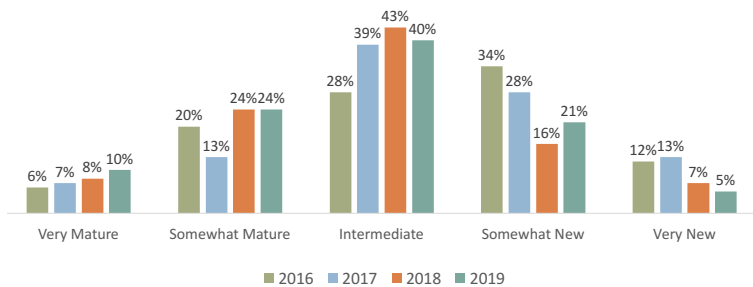| Platform	2016	2017	2018	2019
Facebook	85%	95%	91%	90%
Twitter	85%	91%	91%	83%
Forums/Hosted Communities	34%	27%	37%	32%
Blogs/Personal Websites	32%	30%	9%	20%
Pinterest/Instagram	38%	36%	37%	37%
Google+	17%	18%	14%	12%
News/Review Sites	19%	34%	23%	15%
Other	15%	7%	6%	12%

PRIORITIES, MATURITY AND CARE PRESENCE
Channel Results — Social Media Care

In 2019, the top priority among survey respondents for the Social Media Care channel was integration with other channels. This priority was claimed by 32% of respondents, up from 21% the prior year. Another change of significance — "Expand Capability" tumbled from 38% to 26% year-over-year, a decline of 32%.

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

	2018	2019
Integrate With Other Channels	21%	32%
Expand Capability	38%	26%
Improve Agent Performance	14%	17%
Increase Resolution Rates	14%	11%
Increase Channel Awareness	13%	11%
Reduce Cost/Increase Revenue	0%	3%

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Very Mature	6%	7%	8%	10%
Somewhat Mature	20%	13%	24%	24%
Intermediate	28%	39%	43%	40%
Somewhat New	34%	28%	16%	21%
Very New	12%	13%	7%	5%

Maturity levels for the Social Media Care channel were mostly unchanged year-over-year, with 34% of respondents claiming, "Very Mature" or "Somewhat Mature" in 2019, compared to 32% in 2018. An important indicator of channel maturity is for a channel to offer a high resolution rate, as well as have the ability to solve a variety of issue types. For context, below is the combined "Very Mature" and "Somewhat Mature" results for all channels:

Social Media Care: 34%
Traditional Care: 80%
Interactive Care: 25%
Mobile Care: 17%

Does your company have a social media response team specifically for customer care?

2019 — Yes: 61%
2018 — Yes: 73%
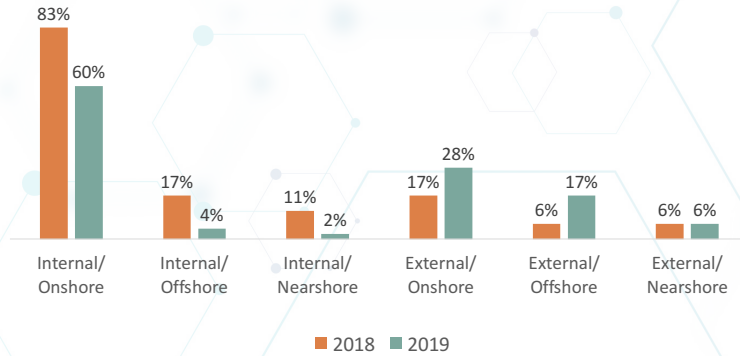**2017 — Yes: 76%**
2016 — Yes: 68%

The percentage of companies with a dedicated customer care response team for social media slipped for the second year in a row. It could be that, as more companies explore universal and multichannel agents, they may be applying these learnings to social media, empowering social media agents to handle additional types of engagement, such as sales.

STAFFING
Channel Results — Social Media Care

In 2019, Social Media Care staffing results leaned toward external resourcing and away from internal resources. While Internal/Onshore resources remain the most popular, there was a noticeable year-over-year increase in both "External/Onshore" and "External/Offshore, both up by 11 points. This change is also reflected in the results below.

How is your Social Media Care channel (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) primarily staffed? (Select all that apply)

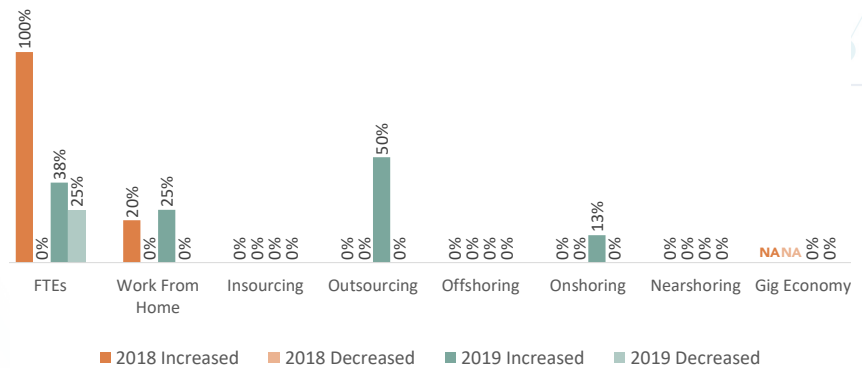|	Internal/Onshore	Internal/Offshore	Internal/Nearshore	External/Onshore	External/Offshore	External/Nearshore
2018	83%	17%	11%	17%	6%	6%
2019	60%	4%	2%	28%	17%	6%

About a quarter of all survey respondents indicated significant change in Social Media Care staffing over the previous 24 months, with much of the change taking shape as increased Outsourcing. Reports of increased FTEs also slowed dramatically, with only a third of respondents indicating an increase, while a quarter indicated a decrease. In 2018 results, 100% of respondents nodded to increases in FTEs, with absolutely no indication of FTE decreases among all respondents.

Has the staffing of your company's Social Media Care channel changed in a significant way over the past 24 months?

2019 — Yes: 24%
2018 — Yes: 13%
2017 — Yes: 20%
2016 — Yes: 38%

In what way has it changed? (Select all that appply)

	FTEs	Work From Home	Insourcing	Outsourcing	Offshoring	Onshoring	Nearshoring	Gig Economy
2018 Increased	100%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA
2018 Decreased	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA
2019 Increased	38%	25%	0%	50%	0%	13%	0%	0%
2019 Decreased	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

What are the primary drivers of this change (e.g., to reduce costs, geopolitical concerns, expanded hours of operation, etc.)?

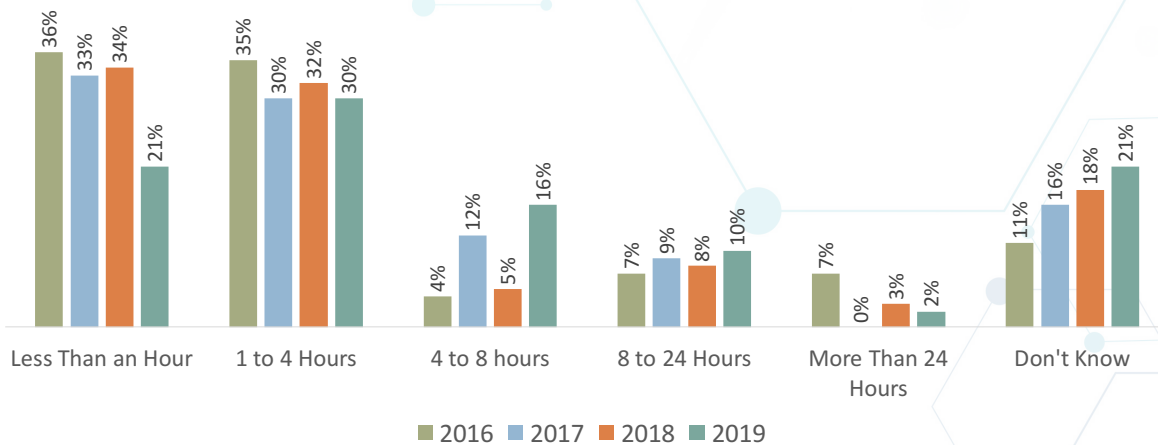|	Structural Change	Increased Volume/Expanded Coverage	Reduce Costs
2018		100%	NA
2019	50%	25%	25%
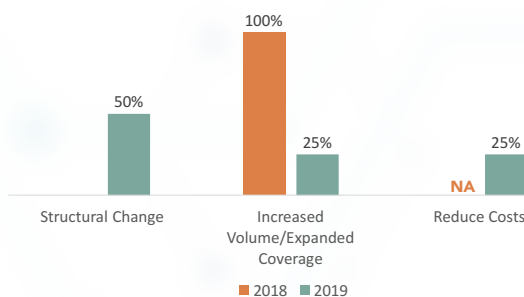
In terms of drivers of the change noted above, "Structural Change" was the primary cause, claimed by 50% of respondents, followed in equal parts by "Reduced Costs" (25%) and "Increased Volume/Expanded Coverage" (also 25%).

RESPONSE TIME
Channel Results — Social Media Care

Similar to results on response times for Interactive Care solutions, response times for social media engagements took a hit year-over-year, with a 13-point drop in the percentage of brands that, on average, respond in less than an hour. This decline represents a 38% decrease. Alongside this slide, there was an 11-point increase in the percentage of brands that indicated an average response time of 4 to 8 hours. As with Interactive Care users, Social Media Care users are keen to get a quick and accurate response. In data from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 56% of Social Media Care users indicated they expect a brand to respond on social media within an hour or less.

On average, how long does it take 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
2016	36%	35%	4%	7%	7%	11%
2017	33%	30%	12%	9%	0%	16%
2018	34%	32%	5%	8%	3%	18%
2019	21%	30%	16%	10%	2%	21%

CX

Mobile Care

CHANNEL/SOLUTION AVAILABILITY
Channel Results — Mobile Care

The percentage of brands offering Mobile Care solutions (both human-assisted and otherwise) rose slightly in 2019. Forty-three percent of respondents laid claim to offering Mobile Care support, inclusive of all solution types, while 37% of respondents indicated they offer Mobile Care solutions that involve live-human assistance, such as mobile chat or SMS/Text. When asked about their channel preference in the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 22% of consumers named Mobile Care as their preferred channel, assuming all channels were equally capable of resolving their issue.

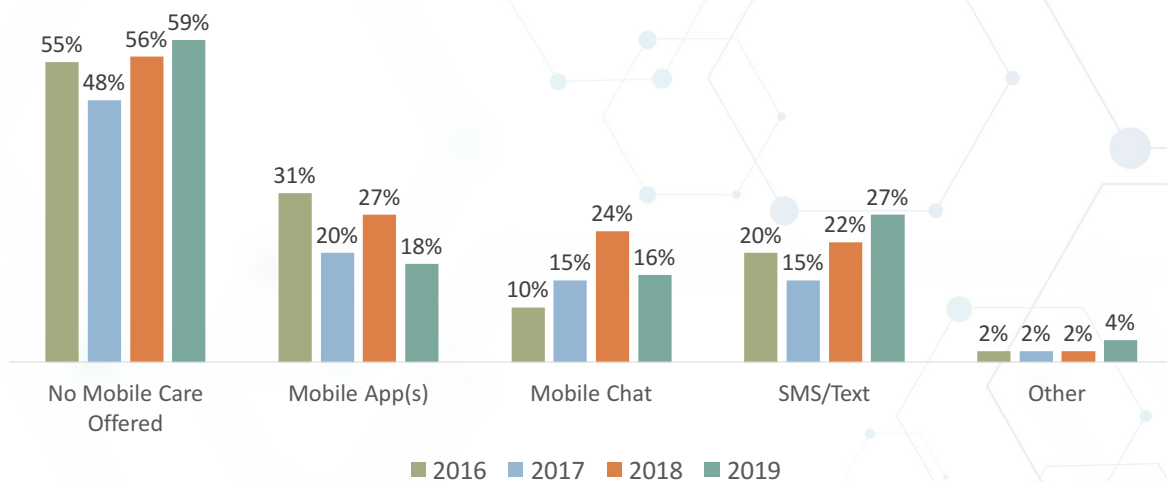| Does your company provide Mobile Care support, including mobile apps, SMS/text and mobile chat?	Does your company provide Mobile Care support that requires human assistance, such as mobile chat or SMS/text?
2019 — Yes: 43%	2019 — Yes: 37%
2018 — Yes: 39%	2018 — Yes: 35%
2017 — Yes: 40%	2017 — Yes: 18%
2016 — Yes: 39%	2016 — Yes: 20%
2015 — Yes: 48%	2015 — Yes: 30%

The most significant year-over-year changes to Mobile Care solutions offered occurred in Mobile Apps, off 9 points and, in Mobile Chat, down 8 points. In the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, consumers were asked about their preferred communication method with brands using a mobile device. Their top three responses: Email (31%), SMS/Text (28%) and Phone Call (17%).

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

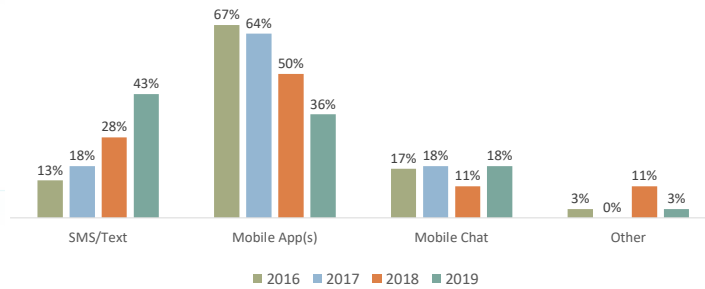|	No Mobile Care Offered	Mobile App(s)	Mobile Chat	SMS/Text	Other
2016	55%	31%	10%	20%	2%
2017	48%	20%	15%	15%	2%
2018	56%	27%	24%	22%	2%
2019	59%	18%	16%	27%	4%

CURRENT INVESTMENT, PROGRAM FEATURES AND TRAFFIC CHANGES
Channel Results — Mobile Care

A trend first established in 2016 continued to strengthen in 2019 as more funds seemingly migrated away from Mobile App development and into SMS/Text. In fact, SMS/Text claimed the top spot for the first time in the question's history. For brands making a deliberate effort to shift funding from Mobile Apps to SMS/Text, this is a sensible move, considering consumer preferences, which favor SMS/Text over Company Apps by a ratio of more than three to one.

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

	SMS/Text	Mobile App(s)	Mobile Chat	Other
2016	13%	67%	17%	3%
2017	18%	64%	18%	0%
2018	28%	50%	11%	11%
2019	43%	36%	18%	3%

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

2019 — Yes: 8%
2018 — Yes: 3%
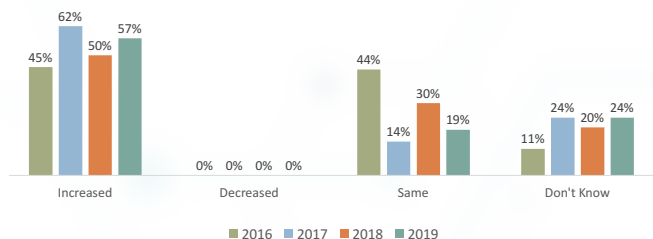**2017 — Yes: 8%**
2016 — Yes: 8%

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

2019 — Yes: 33%
**2018 — Yes: 22%**
2017 — Yes: 13%
2016 — Yes: 5%

Text-enablement for 1-800 numbers remained range-bound in 2019. At the same time, two-way communication for SMS solutions added to a multi-year expansion, with 33% of respondents claiming the offering in 2019, an increase of 11 points year-over-year, and an amazing move from 5% to 33% covering 2016 to 2019.

Traffic to the Mobile Care channel was definitively up year-over-year, although a large, continuing pool of "Don't Know" responses makes it difficult to ascertain the strength of the increase. That said, reports of increases across Mobile Care solutions (below, right) portend a great deal of strength for, and interest in, the Mobile Care channel.

In the past year, how has traffic to Mobile Care channels that require human assistance (such as Mobile Chat) changed?
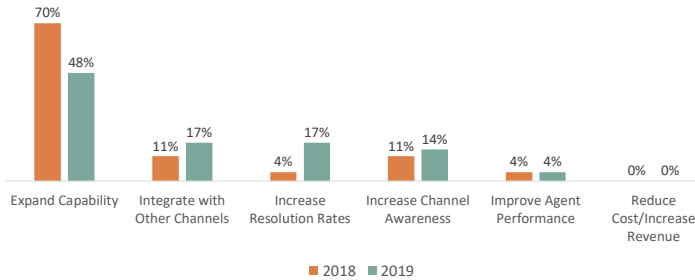
	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't Know
2016	45%	0%	44%	11%
2017	62%	0%	14%	24%
2018	50%	0%	30%	20%
2019	57%	0%	19%	24%

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

	Increased	Decreased	Same
Company App(s)	67%	0%	33%
SMS/Text	72%	14%	14%
Mobile Chat	83%	0%	17%
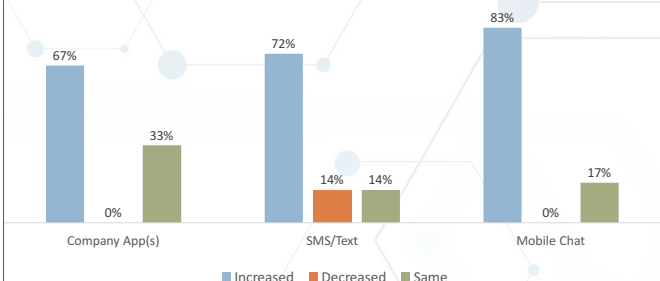
PRIORITIES, MATURITY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
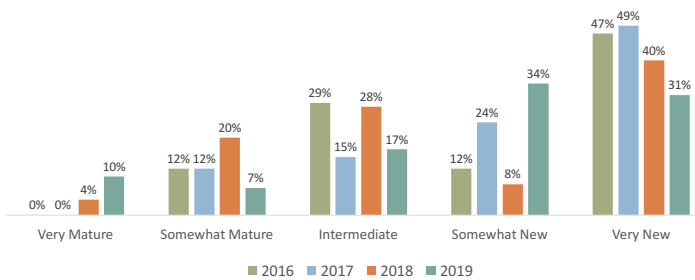## Channel Results — Mobile Care

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

	Expand Capability	Integrate with Other Channels	Increase Resolution Rates	Increase Channel Awareness	Improve Agent Performance	Reduce Cost/Increase Revenue
2018	70%	11%	4%	11%	4%	0%
2019	48%	17%	17%	14%	4%	0%

While "Expand Capability" remains the most common top priority for the Mobile Care channel, "Integrate with Other Channels" and "Increase Resolution Rates" both made strong gains year-over-year, up 6% and 13%, respectively. Increasing resolution rates is an especially ideal move, as the reported resolution rates of the Mobile Care channel lag far behind those of Traditional Care and multichannel, per 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition results.
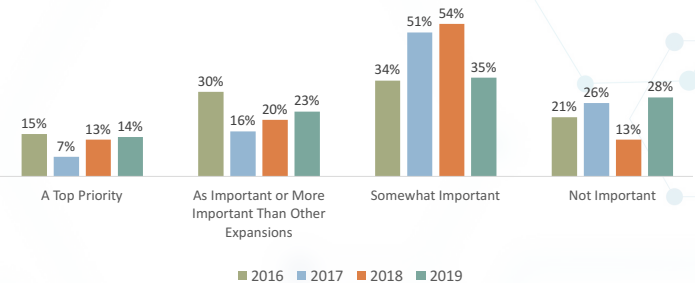
What is your organization's level of maturity within the Mobile Care channel?

	Very Mature	Somewhat Mature	Intermediate	Somewhat New	Very New
2016	0%	12%	29%	12%	47%
2017	0%	12%	15%	24%	49%
2018	4%	20%	28%	8%	40%
2019	10%	7%	17%	34%	31%

For most companies, a high level of maturity within the Mobile Care channel remains elusive. In fact, among all channels of care, Mobile is the least mature. For context, below is the combined "Very Mature" and "Somewhat Mature" results for all channels:

Mobile Care: 17%
Social Media Care: 34%
Traditional Care: 80%
Interactive Care: 25%

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

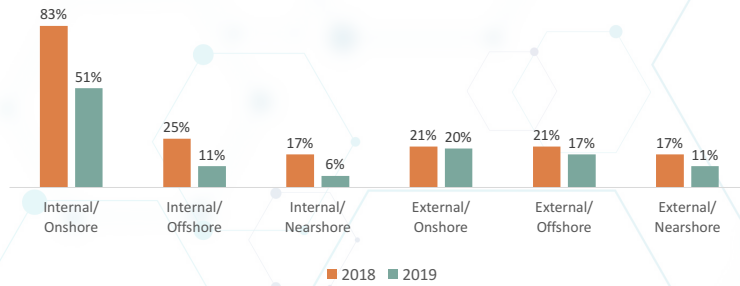|	A Top Priority	As Important or More Important Than Other Expansions	Somewhat Important	Not Important
2016	15%	30%	34%	21%
2017	7%	16%	51%	26%
2018	13%	20%	54%	13%
2019	14%	23%	35%	28%

Among results related to the importance of developing and expanding the Mobile Care channel, the most interesting was the migration from "Somewhat Important" to "Not Important." The only way to make sense of such a shift is to consider the possibility that some companies have recently implemented new Mobile Care solutions, and are now shifting priorities to better address initiatives within other channels of care.

STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIME
Channel Results — Mobile Care

As with the Social Media Care channel (page 58), Internal/ Onshore continues to describe the most common staffing arrangement for the Mobile Care channel. That said, there was a decisive year-over-year decline in the prevalence of this particular staffing approach, slipping from 83% in 2018 to 51% in 2019.

How is your Mobile Care channel (Mobile Chat, SMS/Text, etc.) primarily staffed? (Select all that apply)

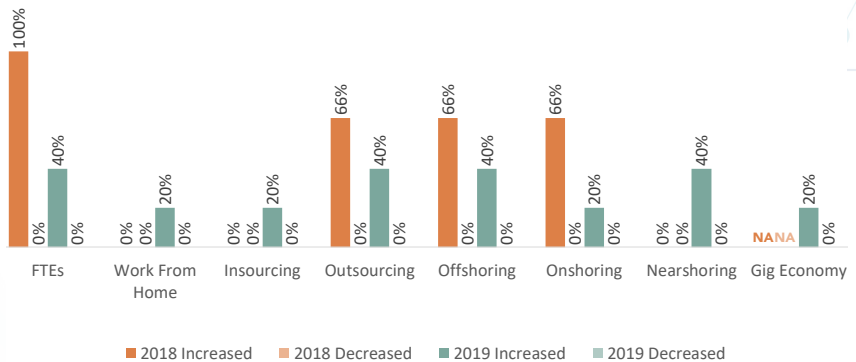|	2018	2019
Internal/Onshore	83%	51%
Internal/Offshore	25%	11%
Internal/Nearshore	17%	6%
External/Onshore	21%	20%
External/Offshore	21%	17%
External/Nearshore	17%	11%

At 26%, more survey participants reported significant staffing changes within their Mobile Care channel in 2019 than any year prior. Furthermore, all signs point to continued growth in the number of FTEs working within the Mobile Care channel, with 40% of respondents indicating an increase in FTEs. "Work From Home" and "Gig Economy" (which was introduced in 2019) both also had strong showings in 2019, at 20% apiece.

Has the staffing of your company's Mobile Care channel changed in a significant way over the past 24 months?

2019 — Yes: 26%
2018 — Yes: 15%
2017 — Yes: 6%
2016 — Yes: 13%
2015 — Yes: 21%

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

	2018 Increased	2018 Decreased	2019 Increased	2019 Decreased
FTEs	100%	0%	40%	0%
Work From Home	0%	0%	20%	0%
Insourcing	0%	0%	20%	0%
Outsourcing	66%	0%	40%	0%
Offshoring	66%	0%	40%	0%
Onshoring	66%	0%	20%	0%
Nearshoring	0%	0%	40%	0%
Gig Economy	NA	NA	20%	0%

What are the primary drivers of this change (e.g., to reduce costs, geopolitical concerns, expanded hours of operation, etc.)?

	2018	2019
Growth/New Channels	100%	80%
Retention	NA	20%
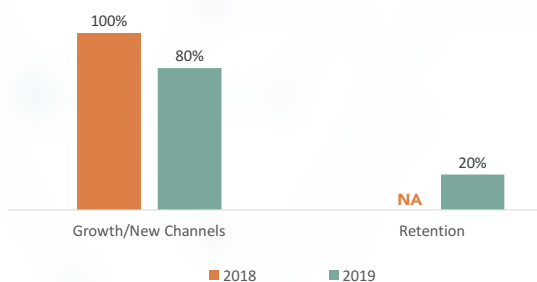
Growth within the Mobile Care channel continued to play a primary role in staffing changes in 2019. Additionally, change for the purpose of retention also made an impact in 2019, with several companies introducing staffing arrangements, such as work from home or gig for the sole purpose of attracting and retaining staff.
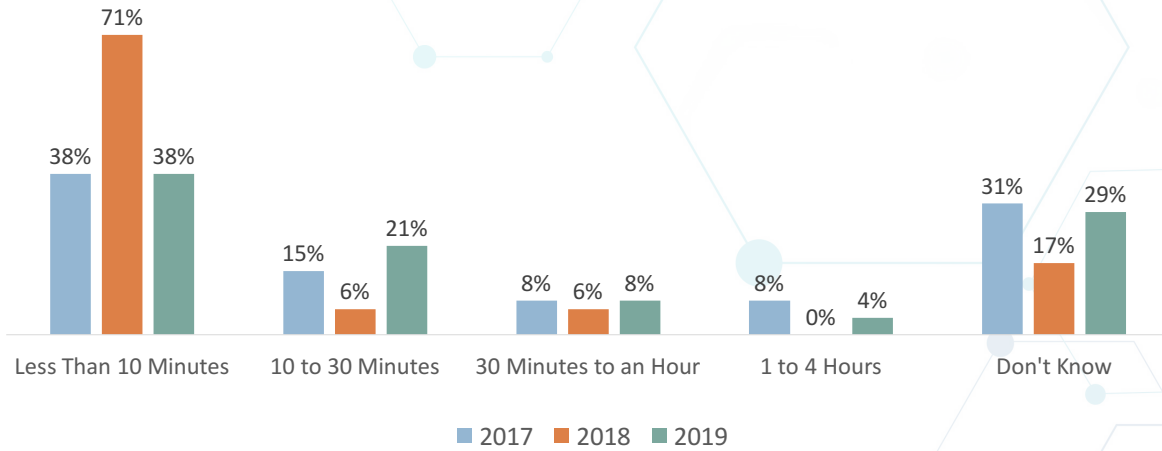
STAFFING AND RESPONSE TIME

Channel Results — Mobile Care

Similar to response times for both Interactive and Social Media Care solutions (pages 54 and 59), average reported response times for Mobile Care solutions had a measurable decline year-over-year. In 2018, 71% of corporate survey respondents indicated an average response time of 10 minutes or less. In 2019, only 38% of respondents indicated the same. As for consumers, in results from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report, 56% of respondents (who were prescreened as users of Mobile Care solutions) indicated they expect brands to provide a response via Mobile Care solutions within 10 minutes.

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 to 4 Hours	Don't Know
2017	38%	15%	8%	8%	31%
2018	71%	6%	6%	0%	17%
2019	38%	21%	8%	4%	29%

Legend: ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

CHANNEL RESULTS CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

• When asked about the top priority for their Traditional Care channel, 50% of respondents answered "Improve Agent Performance" ... a 20 point increase year-over-year (page 48)

• In 2019, only 61% of brands indicated that they had a social media response team dedicated specifically to customer care ... the lowest percentage on record (page 57)

• According to survey results, investment in SMS/Text has risen for the third straight year, while investment in Mobile Apps has decreased for three straight years (page 62)

While new technologies have a constant and profound impact on alternative channels of care (think SMS/Text, chatbots, etc.), Traditional Care appears to be undergoing type of transformation, one that starts with the agents. More and more brands are focusing on agent performance, and this is likely the result of several factors, such as evolving work arrangements like work-from-home and gig economy agents, as well as the advent of the "universal agent." Agents are also expected to handle a greater load of complex issues as more routine issues are siphoned off by automated solutions. Multichannel agents — able to handle interactions across a variety of solution types — are also more common. In 2019, nearly half of survey respondents claimed the adoption of such an approach, which would explain the decrease in dedicated social media response teams.

Aside from the changes in agent hiring and training practices, channel priorities and investments have also undergone dramatic transformation over the past several years. Mobile Care investment is just one example of this, when funds have steadily migrated away from Mobile Apps and into SMS/Text. This is an excellent example of the industry transforming investment to meet customer demand.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves

As we ask more and more of our agents, are we ensuring we are hiring the right candidates and taking the right approach when it comes to training, monitoring and coaching?

As we move away from the dedicated agent model and toward multichannel or "universal agents," are we continuing to adequately meet expectations of customers across channels?

Are we directing our investments into the specific channels, solutions and tools our customers most want to use?
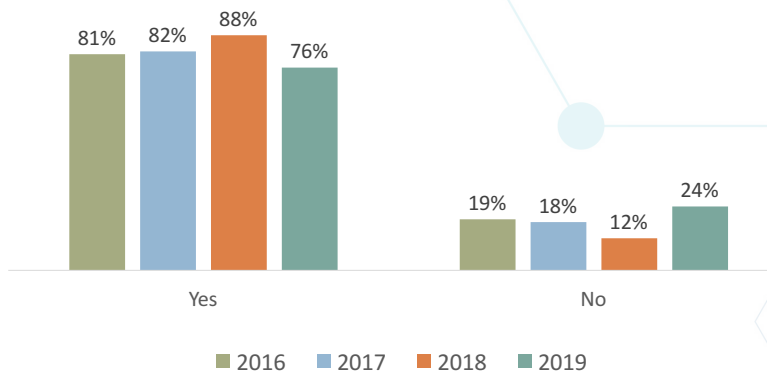
CX

Consumer Edition Comparisons

MEETING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS
Consumer Edition Comparisons

In 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition results, consumers strengthened in their position that brands could be doing much more to meet their needs and expectations, a trend dating back to 2016.
In years past, corporate consensus on the matter tended to fall at the opposite end of the scale, with the overwhelming majority of brands feeling that they were generally meeting the needs and expectations of their customers. In 2019, corporate respondents retreated in their position, with only 76% of brands indicating that they felt they were generally meeting the needs and expectations of their customers. The question of meeting customer needs and expectations is an important one, and brands should seek to understand if they are doing just that within their own customer base.

2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Result

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

	Yes	No
2016	81%	19%
2017	82%	18%
2018	88%	12%
2019	76%	24%

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Result

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

2019 — Yes: 35%
2018 — Yes: 39%
2017 — Yes: 40%
2016 — Yes: 41%
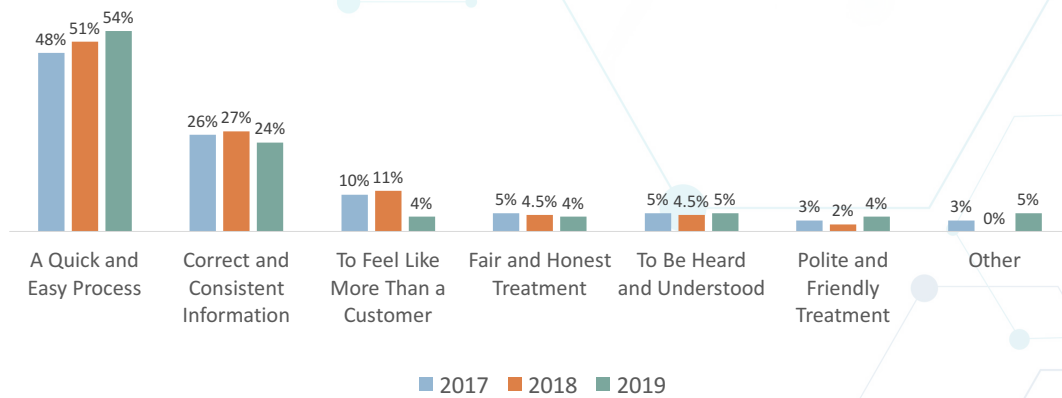**2015 — Yes: 33%**
2014 — Yes: 22%

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT
Consumer Edition Comparisons

What's important to consumers when dealing with a large brand to resolve a customer care issue? According to CXMB Series Corporate Edition respondents, it's mostly all about a quick, easy process and correct, consistent information. But CXMB Series Consumer Edition results beg to differ. In fact, fair and honest treatment consistently tops the list for consumers, alongside with the aforementioned quick and easy process. Furthermore, a significant group of consumers (17%) put politeness and friendliness at the top of the list. So, while it's critical to provide a fast, easy process (as well as correct, consistent information), brands should consider the issue of treatment, and why these aspects of care are near absent in CXMB Series Corporate Edition results.
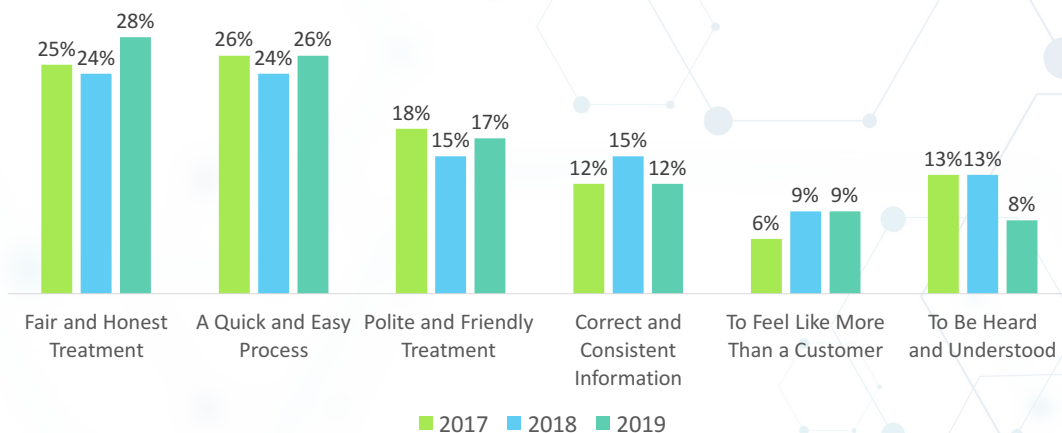
2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Result

Aside from getting their issue resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important for your customers when dealing with a large brand to resolve a customer care issue?

	A Quick and Easy Process	Correct and Consistent Information	To Feel Like More Than a Customer	Fair and Honest Treatment	To Be Heard and Understood	Polite and Friendly Treatment	Other
2017	48%	26%	10%	5%	5%	3%	3%
2018	51%	27%	11%	4.5%	4.5%	2%	0%
2019	54%	24%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Result

Aside from getting your issue resolved satisfactorily, what is most important when dealing with a large brand to resolve a customer care issue?

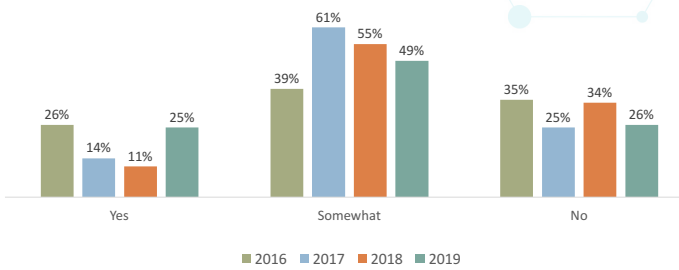|	Fair and Honest Treatment	A Quick and Easy Process	Polite and Friendly Treatment	Correct and Consistent Information	To Feel Like More Than a Customer	To Be Heard and Understood
2017	25%	26%	18%	12%	6%	13%
2018	24%	24%	15%	15%	9%	13%
2019	28%	26%	17%	12%	9%	8%

CONSISTENCY ACROSS CHANNELS
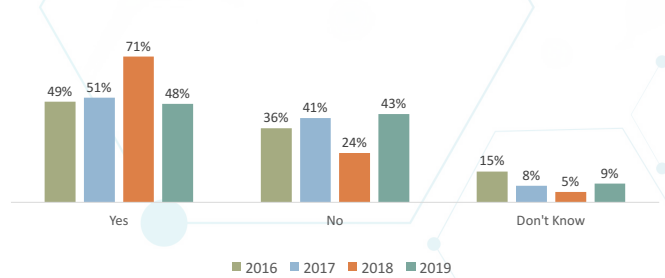## Consumer Edition Comparisons

Consumer satisfaction with the multichannel experience fell to an all-time low in 2019, with only 38% of consumers indicating a satisfactory experience during their most recent multichannel engagement. A powerful driver of this dissatisfaction is inconsistency across channels. In any given year, only about half of consumers feel they had a consistent experience across channels. Corporate survey respondents acknowledge consistency is an opportunity for improvement, with only 25% of 2019 respondents feeling they are providing a consistent customer experience across channels. So, it's surprising only half of brands have any specific initiatives to address consistency across channels.

2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Results

Do you feel your organization does a good job of providing a consistent customer experience when your customers engage your brand across different channels and solutions?
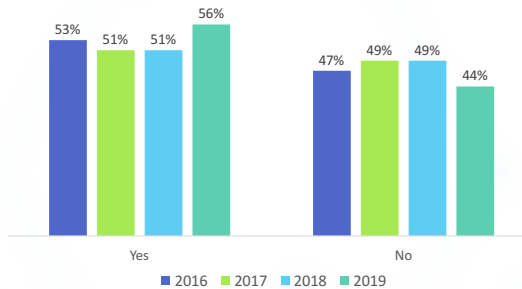
	Yes	Somewhat	No
2016	26%	39%	35%
2017	14%	61%	25%
2018	11%	55%	34%
2019	25%	49%	26%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

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

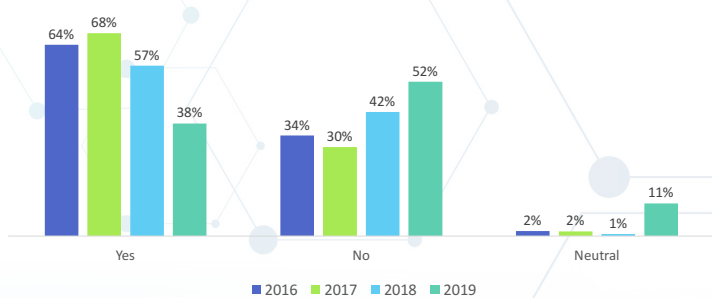|	Yes	No	Don't Know
2016	49%	36%	15%
2017	51%	41%	8%
2018	71%	24%	5%
2019	48%	43%	9%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Results

Was your interaction with customer care consistent across all channels?

	Yes	No
2016	53%	47%
2017	51%	49%
2018	51%	49%
2019	56%	44%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

Was the multichannel experience satisfactory?

	Yes	No	Neutral
2016	64%	34%	2%
2017	68%	30%	2%
2018	57%	42%	1%
2019	38%	52%	11%

■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019

PROACTIVE FOLLOW-UPS
Consumer Edition Comparisons

In 2019, 72% of corporate survey respondents indicated that their brands proactively follow up with customers after a negative customer care experience. While this may be true, it could be the case that follow-ups need to occur with greater frequency since, in 2019 consumer surveying, only 17% of respondents claimed to receive a follow-up after their most recent negative experience. It should also be noted that proactive follow-ups are of critical importance to the health of a company. Since 2016, CXMB Series data shows that when a consumer receives a proactive follow-up, it can greatly diminish the negative impact on future purchase decisions.

2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Result

Following a negative customer care experience, does your organization proactively follow up with customers to help remedy the situation?

2019 — Yes: 72%
2018 — Yes: 75%
2017 — Yes: 83%

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Results

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

2019 — Yes: 17%
2018 — Yes: 23%
2017 — Yes: 15%
2016 — Yes: 20%

Percentage of consumers who indicated the negative experience will have a negative impact on future purchase decisions based on their proactive contact status.

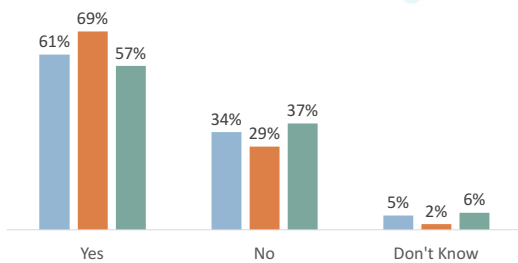| Proactively Contacted	Not Proactively Contacted
2019 — Yes: 63%	2019 — Yes: 89%
2018 — Yes: 67%	2018 — Yes: 83%
2017 — Yes: 73%	2017 — Yes: 84%
2016 — Yes: 73%	2016 — Yes: 86%

CHANNEL PREFERENCES
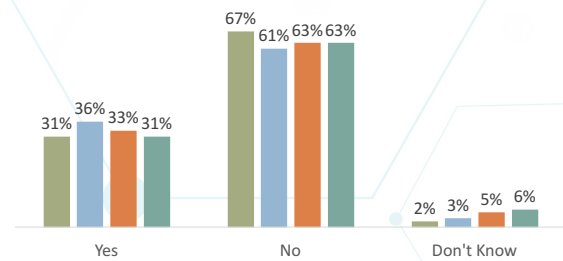### Consumer Edition Comparisons

In 2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition results, only 31% of survey respondents believe their company offers support in all the channels their customers want to use. At the same time, results from the 2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition report show 81% of consumers felt they were able to resolve their customer care issue using their preferred contact method. So, while brands can probably do more for the 19% of consumers who were not able to resolve their issue using their preferred contact method, the vast majority of consumers seem to be satisfied with the channel mix currently offered by brands.

2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Results

Do you believe your company has a good understanding of which channels your customers prefer to use, and how this may or may not differ from what your company offers?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
	61%	34%	5%
	69%	29%	2%
	57%	37%	6%

Do you believe your company offers support in all the channels that your customers want to use?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
	31%	67%	2%
	36%	61%	3%
	33%	63%	5%
	31%	63%	6%

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Result

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

2019 — Yes: 81%
**2018 — Yes: 76%**
2017 — Yes: 84%

ALTERNATIVE CHANNEL RESOLUTION RATES

Consumer Edition Comparisons

The resolution rate of alternative care channels (Interactive, Mobile and Social Media Care) continues to lag behind that of Traditional Care. Across Interactive and Mobile Care users, an average of 38% of consumers are disappointed by the fact that they had to seek a resolution outside of their channel of choice, typically turning to Traditional Care. Furthermore, the same can be said of roughly 25% of Social Media Care users. This being the case, it's worth reflecting on the fact that only 41% of 2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition survey respondents had initiatives in place to increase the resolution rates of alternative channels.

2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Result

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to increase the resolution capabilities of alternative channels (i.e., Interactive Care, Social Media Care and Mobile Care)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2017	50%	37%	13%
2018	51%	40%	9%
2019	41%	51%	8%
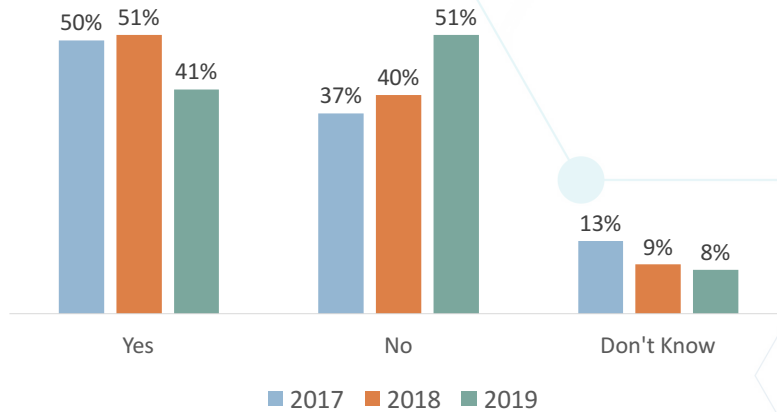
2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Result

Percentage of alternative channel users who were disappointed by the process because they had to resolve the issue outside of their channel of choice.
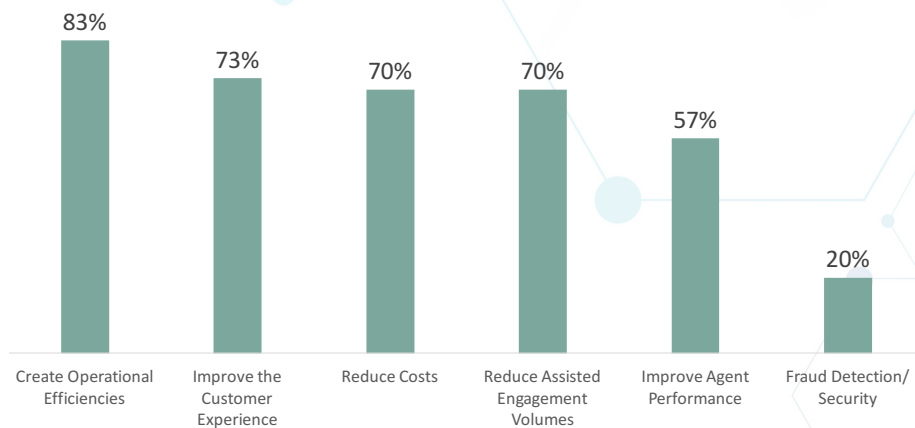

	2017	2018	2019
Interactive Care Users	36%	41%	41%
Social Media Care Users	26%	25%	24%
Mobile Care Users	41%	40%	34%
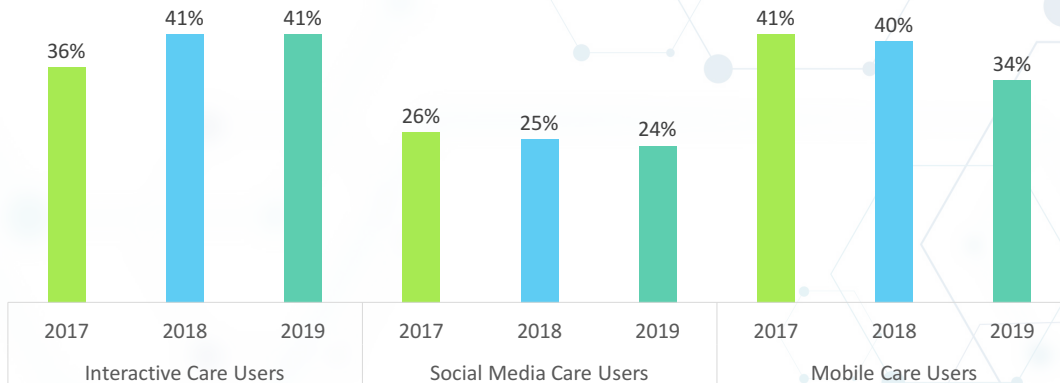
IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Consumer Edition Comparisons

Undoubtedly, brands are looking to AI-powered solutions to create efficiencies and reduce operating costs. However, a not-so-insignificant portion (73%) also give a nod to improving the customer experience. Consumers, on the other hand, are not yet entirely sold on AI and the increased availability of unassisted solutions leading to a better customer experience. In fact, in recent CXMB Series Consumer Edition results, only 20% of respondents said the increased availability of unassisted solutions (including AI-powered solutions) was making the customer experience better, although this result showed improvement year-over-year.
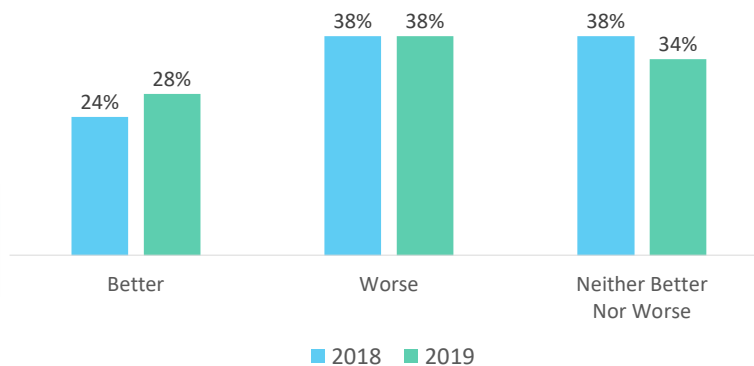
2019 CXMB Series Corporate Edition Result

Which objectives are you primarily trying to accomplish with your use or future use of AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply)

Create Operational Efficiencies	Improve the Customer Experience	Reduce Costs	Reduce Assisted Engagement Volumes	Improve Agent Performance	Fraud Detection/ Security
83%	73%	70%	70%	57%	20%

2019 CXMB Series Consumer Edition Result

In your opinion, do you think the increasing availability of unassisted solutions is making the overall customer experience better or worse?

	Better	Worse	Neither Better Nor Worse
2018	24%	38%	38%
2019	28%	38%	34%

■ 2018 ■ 2019

METHODOLOGY

The 2019 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 distributed privately by email invitation, and promoted via social media. Private 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 October 8 through December 2, 2019. This report's content was assembled using the data from 50 complete surveys and 16 partially completed surveys.

ABOUT THE STUDY'S AUTHORS

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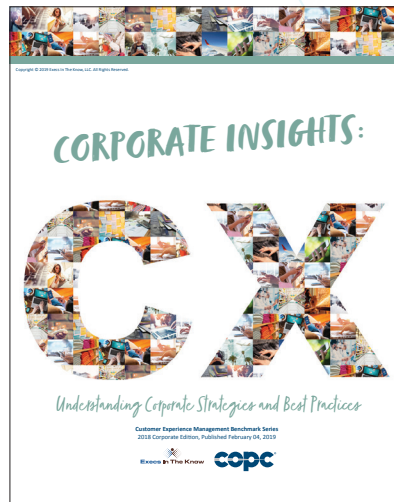To learn more about COPC Inc., visit www.copc.com.

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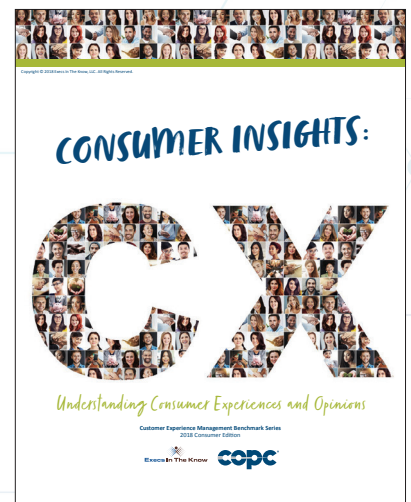Customer Experience Management Benchmark Series?

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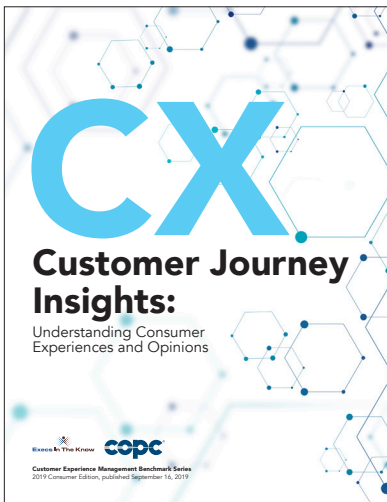
2019 Consumer Edition

2018 Corporate Edition

2018 Consumer Edition