Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series
Consumer Edition

2020 Consumer Experiences and Opinions:

A Year Like No Other

Execs In The Know

copc

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Preface

2020 has been a year like no other.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated social and economic restrictions forced organizations to transition contact center staff to work-at-home virtually overnight, while also impacting how consumers interact with brands.

The research behind this year's consumer report investigates how consumer behaviors and opinions have been shaped or changed by the unusual circumstances faced by organizations globally.

We surveyed more than 5,000 consumers in the United States to ask them about their experiences and perceptions of dealing with brands' customer care departments or self-service options.

As in previous years, we have examined the data to spot any emerging trends and we uncovered four key themes:

- COVID-19's effect on consumers' interactions with brands
- Chat's emergence as a widely used, mainstream channel
- Improvements in self-service technology
- The service journey's impact on CX metrics

At Execs In The Know, our purpose is simple: to set the agenda for the future of customer experience.

We hope you find this 2020 Consumer Edition of the Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series filled with insightful data, research, and learnings on the evolution of consumer expectations and experiences.

Execs In The Know

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Key Definitions

Net Promoter Score℠ (NPS®)

The Net Promoter Score is a customer loyalty metric created by Fred Reichheld, Bain & Company and Satmetrix in 2003. It is based on the perspective that every company's customers can be placed within three types.

"Promoter" customers are enthusiastic and loyal, who continually buy from the company and 'promote' the company to their friends and family.

"Passive" customers are happy but can easily be tempted to leave by an attractive competitor deal. Passive customers may become promoters if you improve your product, service, or customer experience.

"Detractor" customers are unhappy, feel mistreated and their experience is going to reduce the amount of which they purchase from you.

Customers who give you a rating of 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10 are considered Promoters. Customers who give you a rating of 7 or 8 are passive customers and while they are not dissatisfied, they do not factor into the NPS score. Lastly, any customers who provide you a rating of 6 or lower are considered your detractors.

"Net Promoter®, NPS®, NPS Prism®, and the NPS-related emoticons are registered trademarks of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc., and Fred Reichheld. Net Promoter Score℠ and Net Promoter System℠ are service marks of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc., and Fred Reichheld."

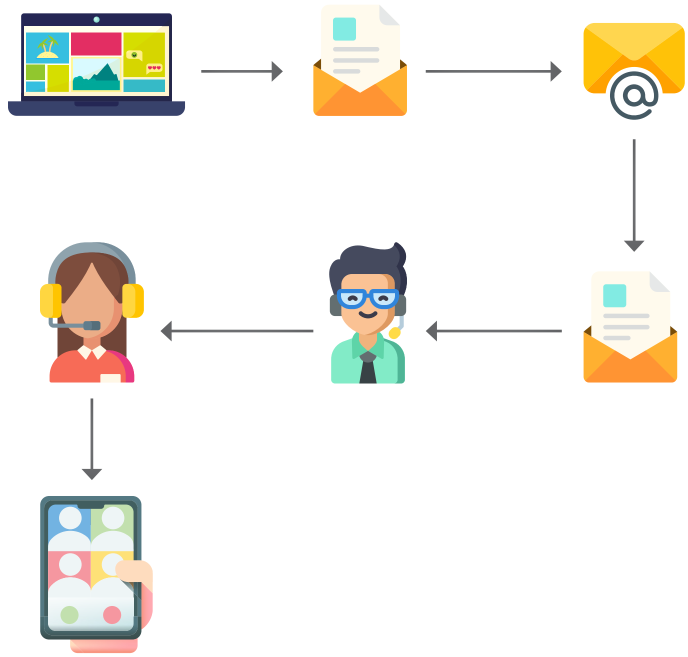
Customer Effort Score

The Gartner Customer Effort Score (CES) is a customer experience survey metric that enables service organizations to measure the ease of customer interaction and resolution during a request.

CES is measured by asking a single question (The company made it easy for me to handle my issue) and scoring the response on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of disagreement with the statement.

COPC Inc.'s high performance benchmark for the CES is 75% of respondents scoring a 6 (Agree) or a 7 (Strongly Agree) on the 7 point scale.

05 Service Journeys



In this year's report we use the terminology "Service Journey" more often than in previous years.

A service journey is the "operational" part of the customer journey, focusing specifically on the time-period that begins with the customer's first interaction with the company to the point at which their issue is completed.

As such, there are only three possible states of a service journey:

- In Progress
- Completed (Resolved)
- Completed (Not Resolved)

The service journey can involve one contact or multiple contacts and can be a single channel or multichannel journey. This year's research indicates that:

- 70% of consumers have been involved in multichannel and/or multi-contact service journeys.
- The longer it takes or the more touchpoints involved to resolve an issue, the less satisfied the consumer will be at the end of their journey.

To succeed in the new era of customer experience, organizations must identify and optimize the beginning touchpoints of the customer's journey. They must also understand that each customer will follow a different path and be able to anticipate the customer's possible next steps in the service journey.

Customers find service journeys easier as they become more familiar with the task they have at hand, so organizations need to educate new customers about the typical service journeys they will encounter.

Summary of Key Findings

COVID-19 Impact

- While just more than half of the respondents reported they changed how they interact with brands due to COVID-19, only a quarter of them thought the changes were negative and 16% actually perceived these changes as positive.
- Consumer perception is that it is not necessarily getting any easier or any more difficult to resolve customer care issues.

Self-Service Technology (SST)

- Self-Service Technology (SST) is used as a starting point for one in five multichannel service journeys, but it is only the resolution point in one in ten service journeys.
- Customers who reported having their issue resolved were 7.5x more satisfied with the SST than customers who did not have their issue resolved.
- The reported use of SST has increased year-over-year, with almost twice as many consumers stating they tried to use SST to resolve their issues in 2020 compared to previous years.
- Satisfaction with chatbots is generally low, with only 50% of respondents stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with their chatbot experience.
- Although issue resolution via SST was low (at 69%), the rate has improved compared to previous years.
- Satisfaction with SST seems to be increasing year-over-year (from 40% top two box satisfaction in 2018 to 60% in 2020).
- Assisted transactions have much higher resolution rates than unassisted transactions (via SST).

Multichannel Journeys

- Every year, ultimate issue resolution for multichannel service journeys remains at approximately 75%.
- When customers are “forced” to use multiple channels, they are much more dissatisfied with the service journey than they are when they “choose” to use multiple channels.
- The number of contacts required to resolve issues has an impact on all three of the major customer experience metrics. Top Two Box Customer Satisfaction (TTB CSAT), Customer Effort Score (CES) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) all decline as the number of contacts increase.
- Customers who are transferred are less satisfied than those who are not transferred.

Customer Experience

- The strongest driver of customer satisfaction is issue resolution.
- Approximately 75-80% of consumers who have a bad experience will tell someone about it, either publicly or privately.
- Proactively contacting customers after a negative experience to try to solve the problem (or apologize for it) reduces the impact it may have on future purchasing decisions.

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Survey Results

- COVID-19 Impact
- Consumer Preference and Experience when Interacting with Brands
- Multichannel Interactions
- Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology
- Consumer Expectations about Speed of Answer
- Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions
- Satisfaction Drivers
- Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

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COVID-19 Impact
Survey Results

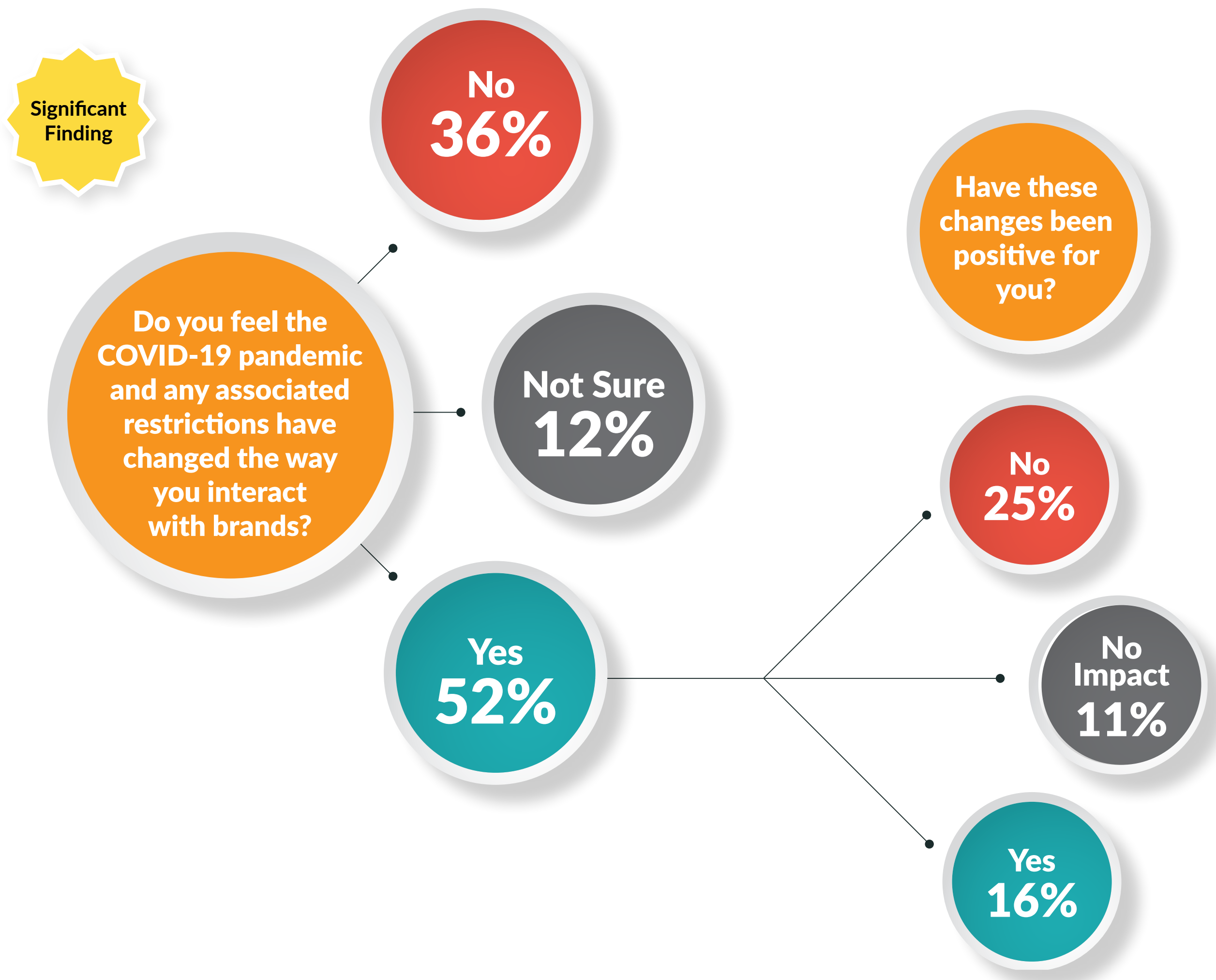
Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included 267 online responses.

Has COVID-19 impacted how customers connect with brands?

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions have clearly had an impact on the way customers work and interact in communities.

The impact, though, does not seem to be as strongly felt by consumers when they are interacting with brands.

While just more than half of the respondents reported having changed the way they interact with brands, only a quarter of them did not feel the changes were positive.



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Consumer Preference & Experience When Interacting With Brands

Survey Results

- Contact Channel Preference and Use
- Issue Resolution and Customer Effort

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 280 responses across the data points.

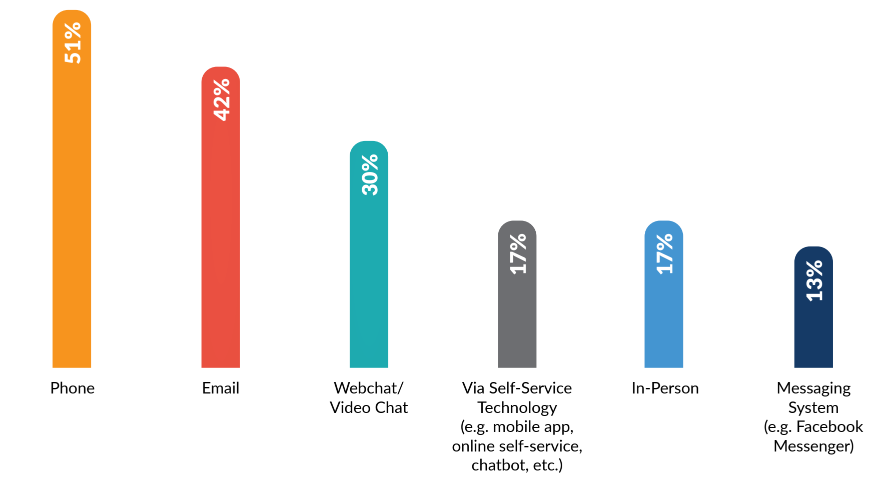
Consumer Preference And Experience When Interacting With Brands

Contact Channel Preference and Use

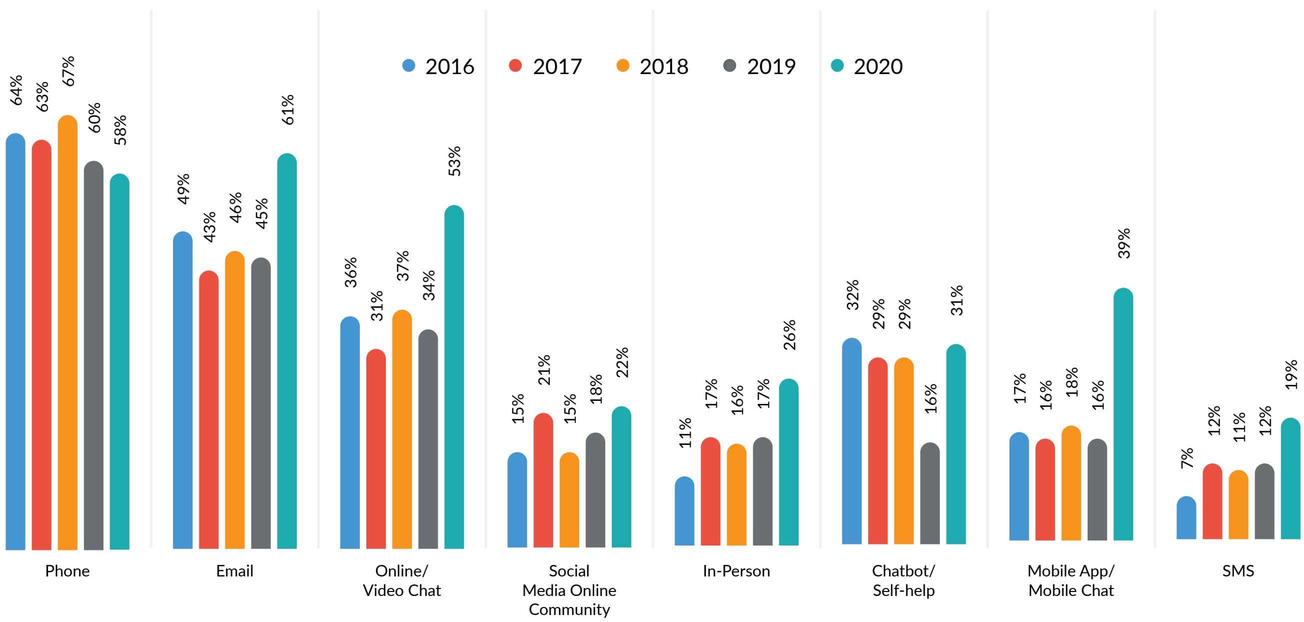
Just over **half of the respondents chose phone** as the most preferred contact method to resolve a customer service issue.

The least preferred channel among consumers is social media messaging, closely followed by In-Person and self-service channels.

If you knew that your customer service issue would be resolved regardless of contact channel, which would be your preferred contact method? (Select all that apply)



Within the past 12 months, which contact channel(s) have you used to engage with a brand's customer care department? (Select all that apply)



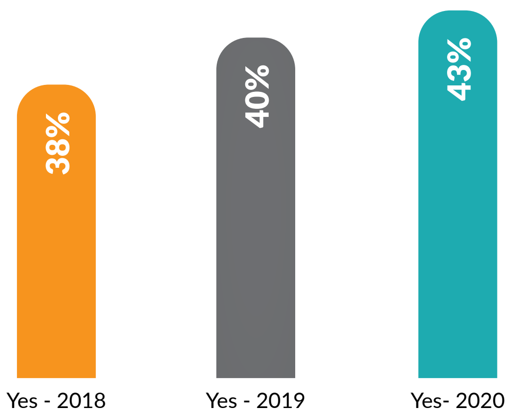
Phone remains one of the main channels that consumers use when contacting brands, but as a relative proportion of all channels being used, phone usage continued its long-term downward trend in 2020.

There were, though, noticeable increases in the proportion of consumers who stated they had used online chat, video chat, and mobile chat. In fact, the data shows that **almost twice as many consumers used Chat in 2020 compared to previous years.**

Consumer Preference And Experience When Interacting With Brands

Contact Channel Preference and Use

Has your preferred contact method changed in recent years?



Significant Finding

There is a slight increase year-over-year in respondents stating their preferred contact method has changed.

In fact, almost **one in two consumers state their preferred contact channel has changed** in recent years.

This might be reflected in the results on the previous chart showing a decrease in phone usage and an increase in chat, SMS, and email usage.

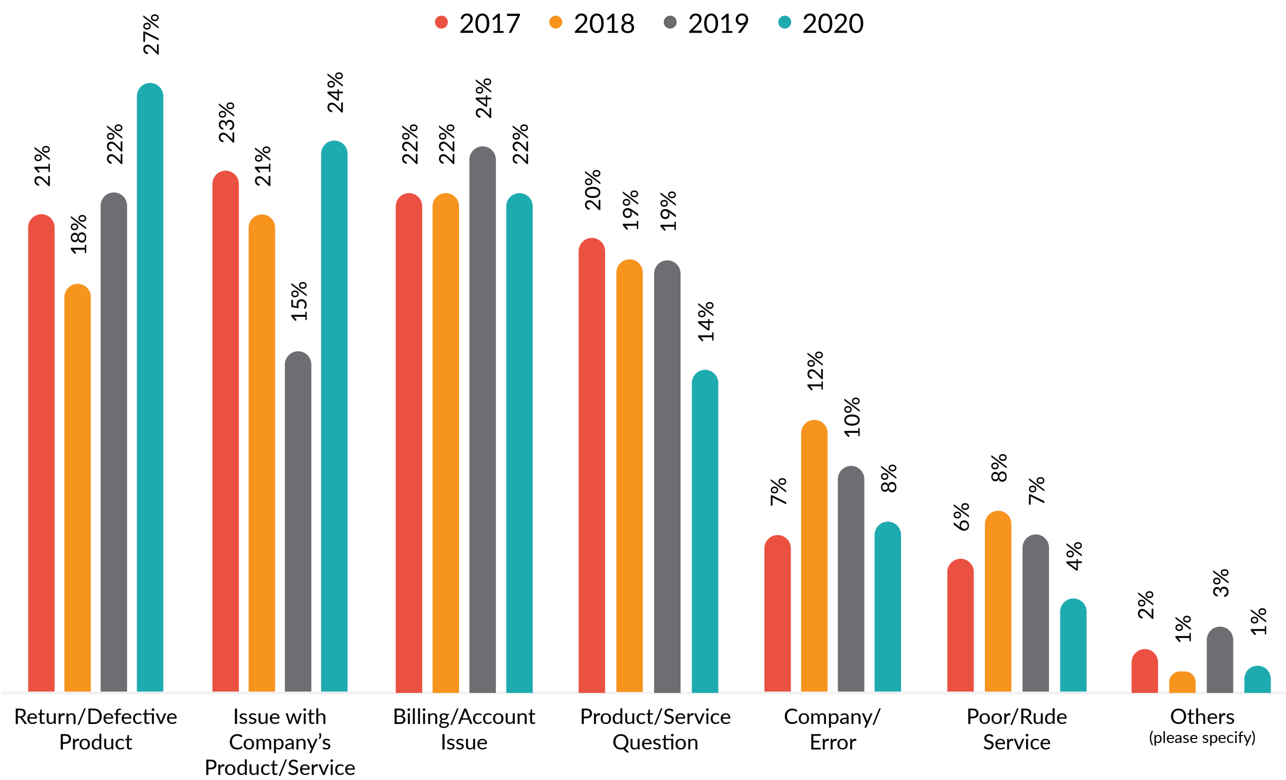
What are your biggest factors in determining your preferred channel when contacting customer care? (Select all that apply)

Consumers still rank **convenience/ease of use** as the biggest factors in determining which channel they use when contacting customer care.

This year's survey has seen big increases in **convenience/ease of use** and **looking for a quick answer**.

This might indicate that consumers are now willing to find and use whichever channel provides them with the most effortless experience.

Which response best describes the nature of your most recent issue?



The nature of inquiries remains similar compared to previous years, with **returns/defective products, issues with a company's service, and billing/account issues** the top three contact reasons year-over-year for the past four years.

Consumer Preference And Experience When Interacting With Brands

Issue Resolution and Customer Effort

Significant Finding

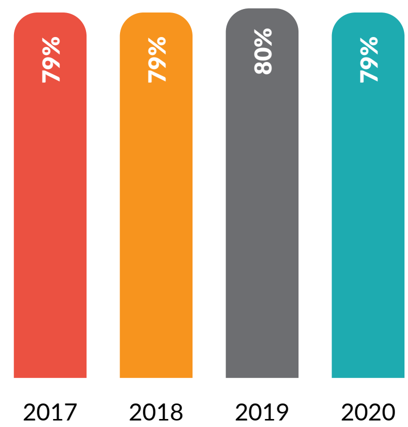
Issue resolution remains the same year-over-year at approximately 80%.

This can be viewed as both a positive and a negative.

Positive:
Although COVID-19 has had such a large impact on the customer contact industry, customers' issues are still being resolved at the same rate as previously.

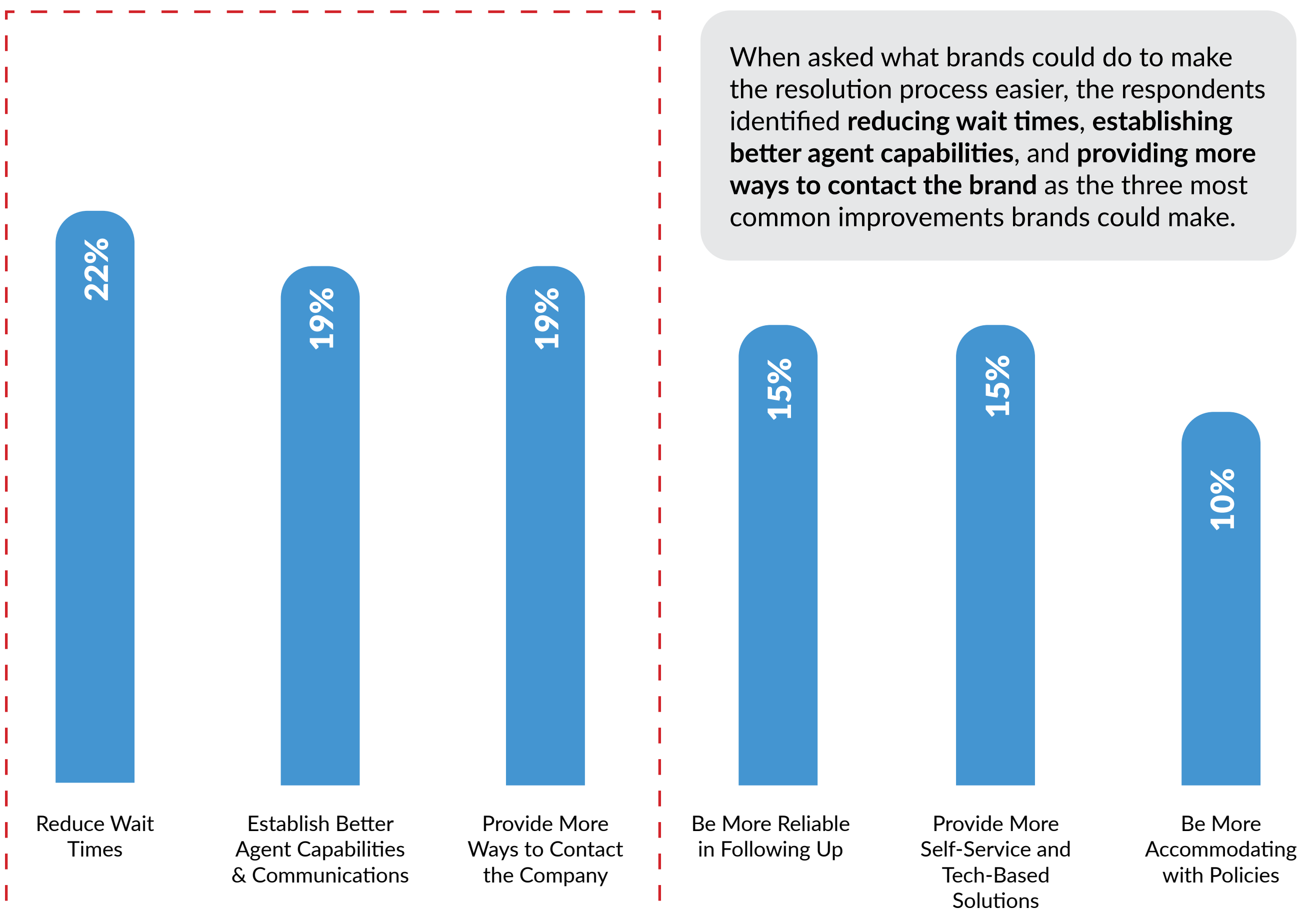
Negative:
Despite significant investment in the customer contact industry, issue resolution has not noticeably increased over the last four years.

Was your issue resolved?



What can brands do differently to make the resolution process as easy as possible?

When asked what brands could do to make the resolution process easier, the respondents identified **reducing wait times**, **establishing better agent capabilities**, and **providing more ways to contact the brand** as the three most common improvements brands could make.



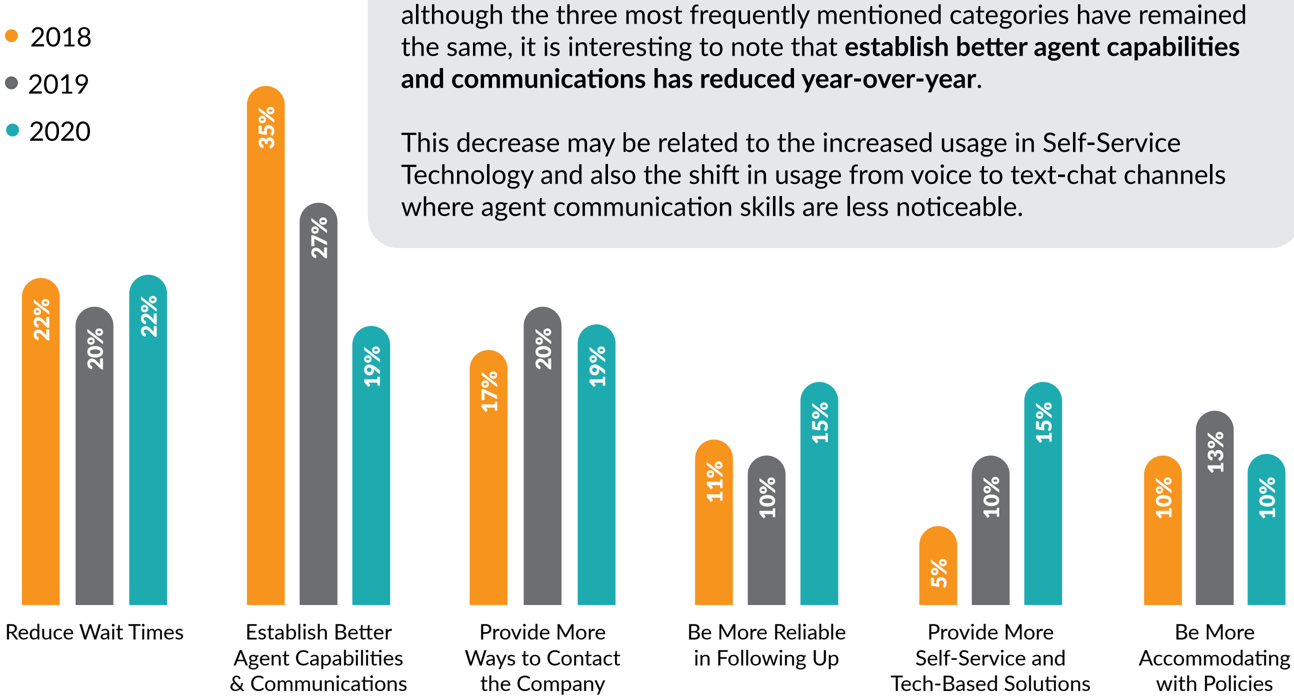
Consumer Preference And Experience When Interacting With Brands

Issue Resolution and Customer Effort

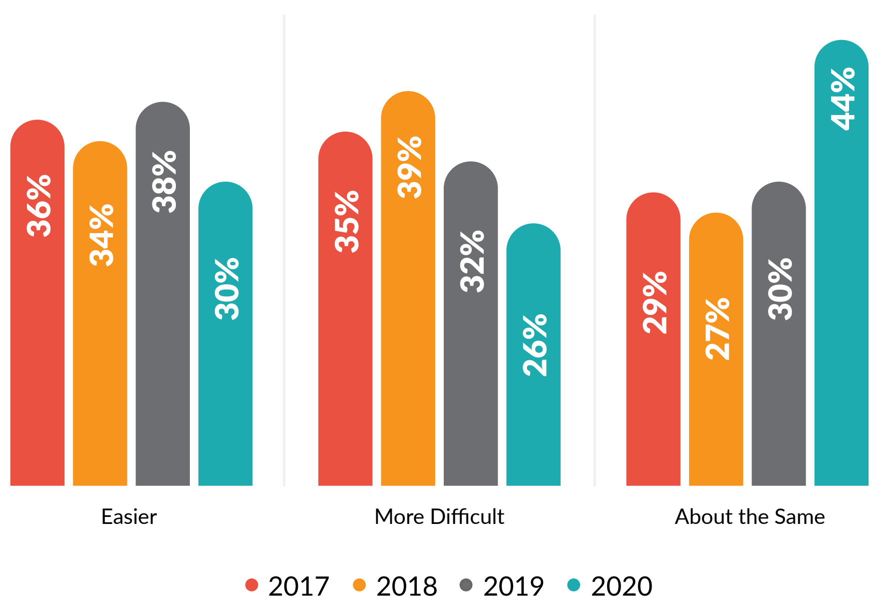
What can brands do differently to make the resolution process as easy as possible?

When comparing the responses to this question over the last three years, although the three most frequently mentioned categories have remained the same, it is interesting to note that **establish better agent capabilities and communications has reduced year-over-year**.

This decrease may be related to the increased usage in Self-Service Technology and also the shift in usage from voice to text-chat channels where agent communication skills are less noticeable.



Do you feel that resolving customer care issues with brands has gotten easier or more difficult in recent years?



Significant Finding

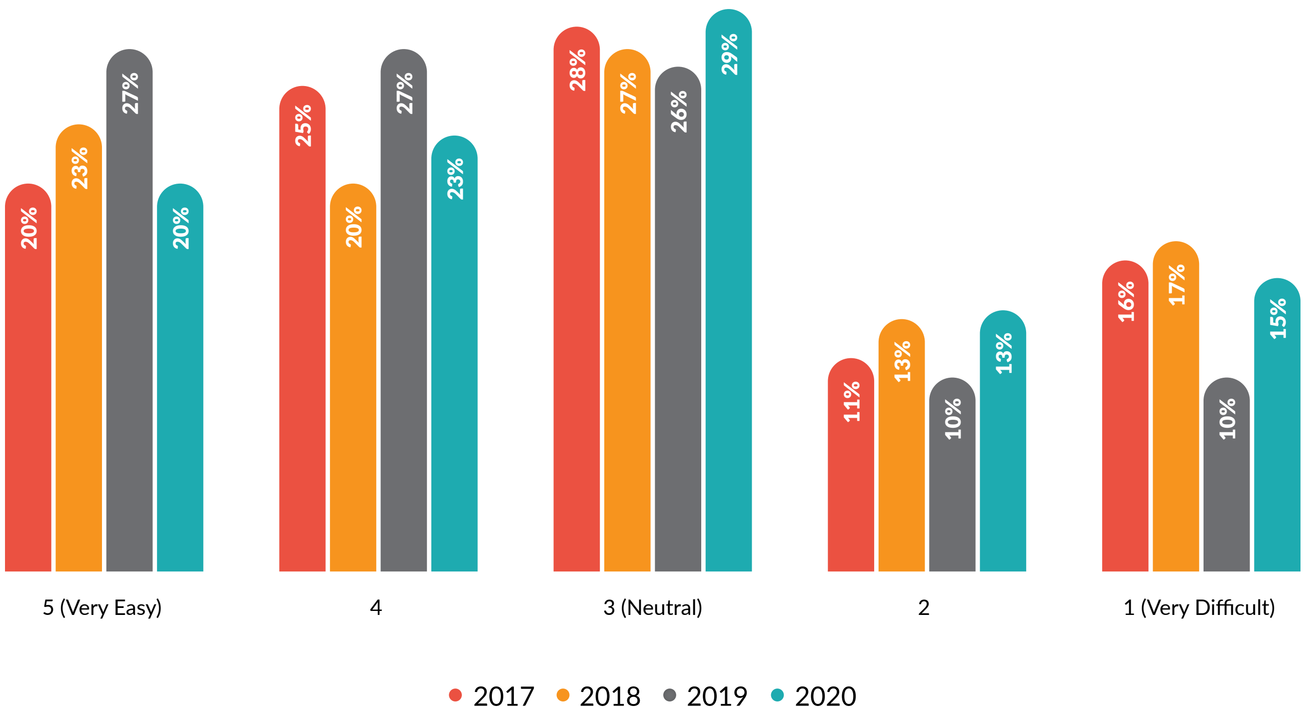
Consumers' perception is that it is **not necessarily getting easier or more difficult to resolve** customer care issues.

This aligns with our overall findings referenced on the previous page that issue resolution has remained at approximately the same level over the last four years.

Consumer Preference And Experience When Interacting With Brands

Issue Resolution and Customer Effort

On a scale of one to five, how difficult was it to resolve your issue?



Consumers ranked the **difficulty of resolving their most recent customer care issue about the same** as they had in previous years. This is consistent with consumers' perception that it has not become easier or more difficult to resolve customer care issues (See Page **15**).

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Multichannel Interactions
Survey Results

- Multichannel Journey
- Multichannel Resolution and Satisfaction

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 214 responses across the data points.

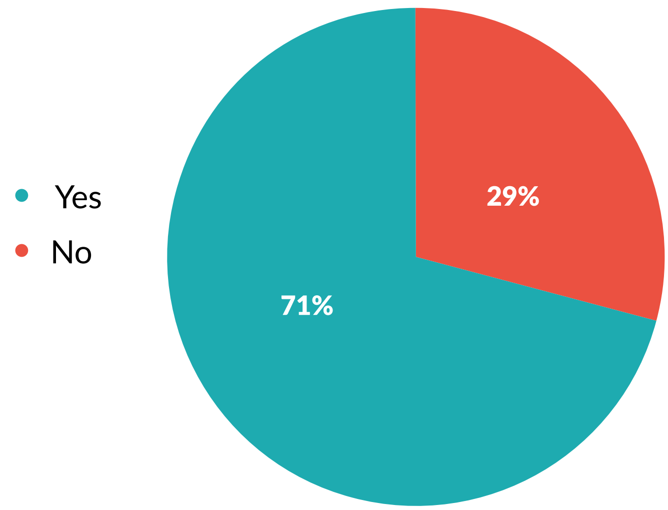
Multichannel Interactions

Multichannel Journey

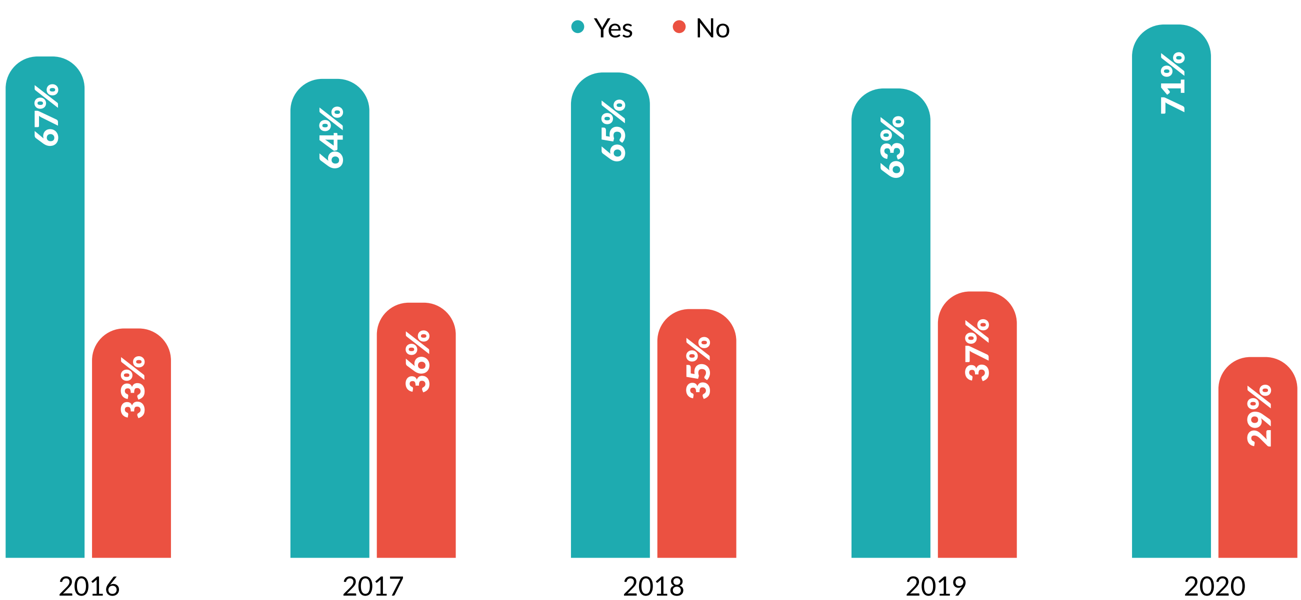
Over 70% of the consumers surveyed stated that their customer care issues were resolved over the course of multiple contacts and across multiple channels.

It is important for organizations to understand the rate at which customers are using multiple channels to resolve issues as they begin to incorporate disciplines such as service design into their customer experience strategies.

Within the past 12 months, did you use multiple channels (like phone, email, and social media) to resolve a single customer care issue?



Within the past 12 months, did you use multiple channels (like phone, email and social media) to resolve a single customer care issue?



An increasing number of consumers are using multiple channels when resolving customer care issues.

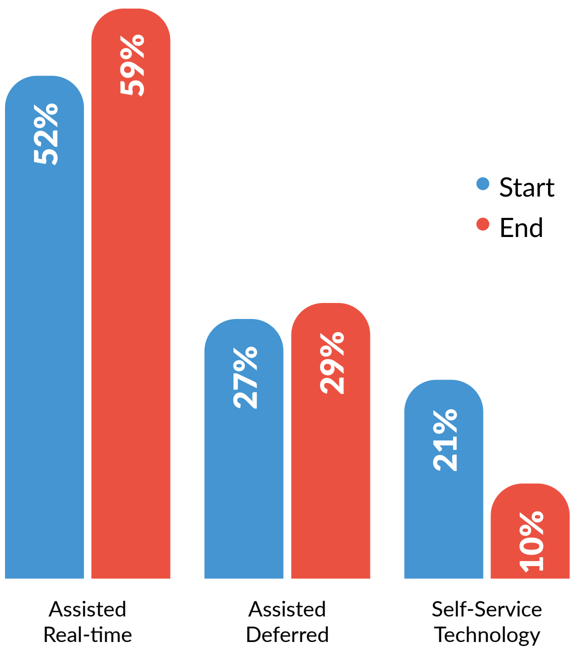
The percentage of consumers stating they use multiple channels to resolve a single customer care issue has increased from 63% to 71%.

This could reflect the fact that there are an increased number of organizations providing multiple channels for their customers to use and also that customers are becoming more comfortable using different channels.

Multichannel Interactions

Multichannel Journey

In which channel did your multichannel engagement begin/end?



Significant Finding

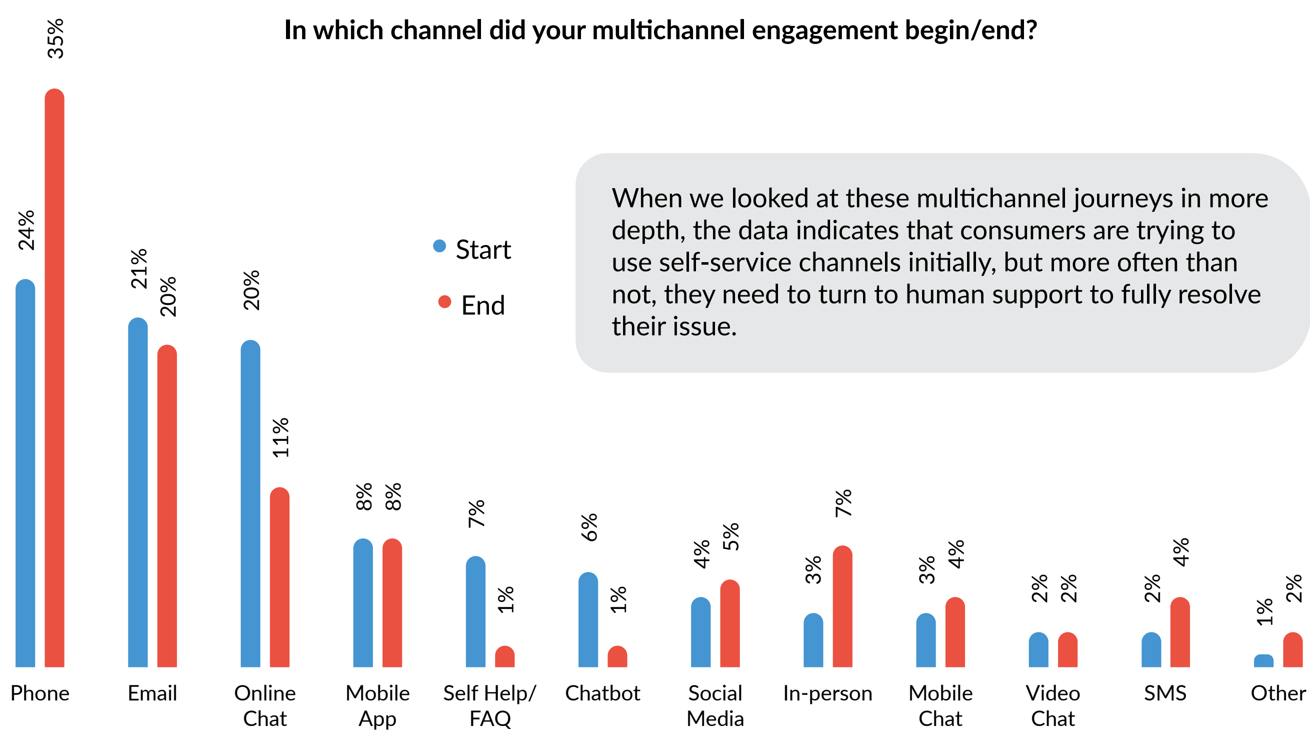
52% of these multichannel service journeys begin in real-time human-assisted channels, but 59% finish in these channels.

Self-Service Technology is used as a starting point for one in five multichannel service journeys, but is the resolution point in only one in ten service journeys.

Note:

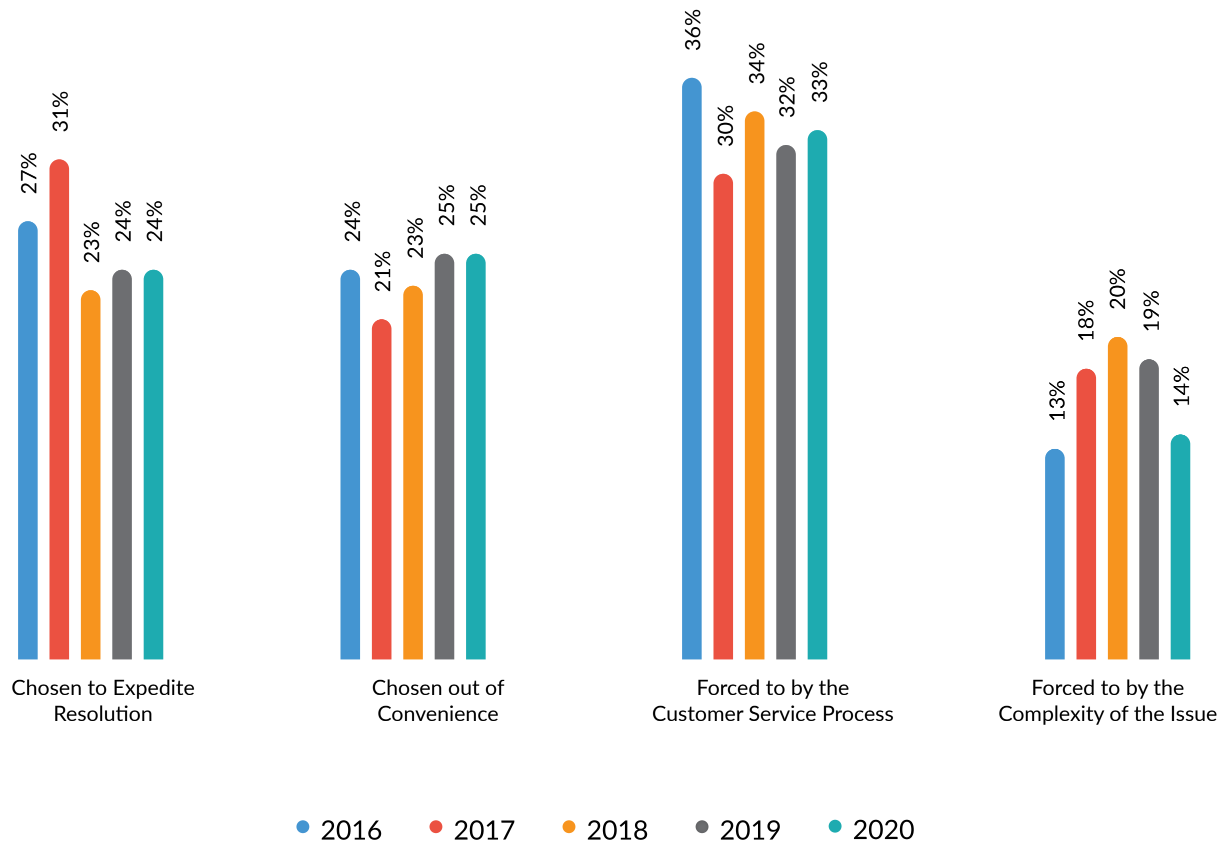
- Assisted real-time = channels where the consumer is communicating live with an agent assisting them (e.g. phone, webchat, video chat).
- Assisted deferred = channels where the consumer communicates with the brand and awaits a response (e.g. via email, mail)
- Self-Service Technology = channels where the customer interfaces with technology to resolve their issue (e.g. websites, mobile apps, IVRs)

In which channel did your multichannel engagement begin/end?



When we looked at these multichannel journeys in more depth, the data indicates that consumers are trying to use self-service channels initially, but more often than not, they need to turn to human support to fully resolve their issue.

Why did the process take you across multiple channels?



The way the customer care processes are designed continues to be the single biggest reason for customers using multiple channels to resolve their issues.

47% of the consumers who used multiple channels to resolve their issues were "forced" to do so due to either complexity or the customer care processes themselves. This is a slightly lower level than in previous years.

Multichannel Interactions

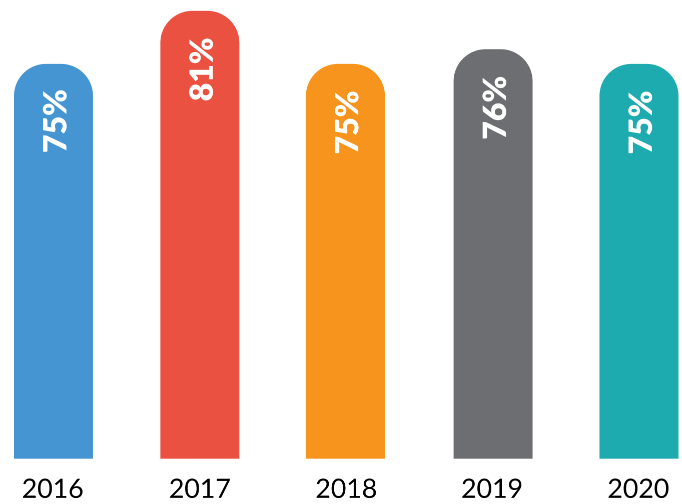
Multichannel Resolution and Satisfaction

Every year, ultimate **issue resolution for these multichannel service journeys remains at approximately 75%.**

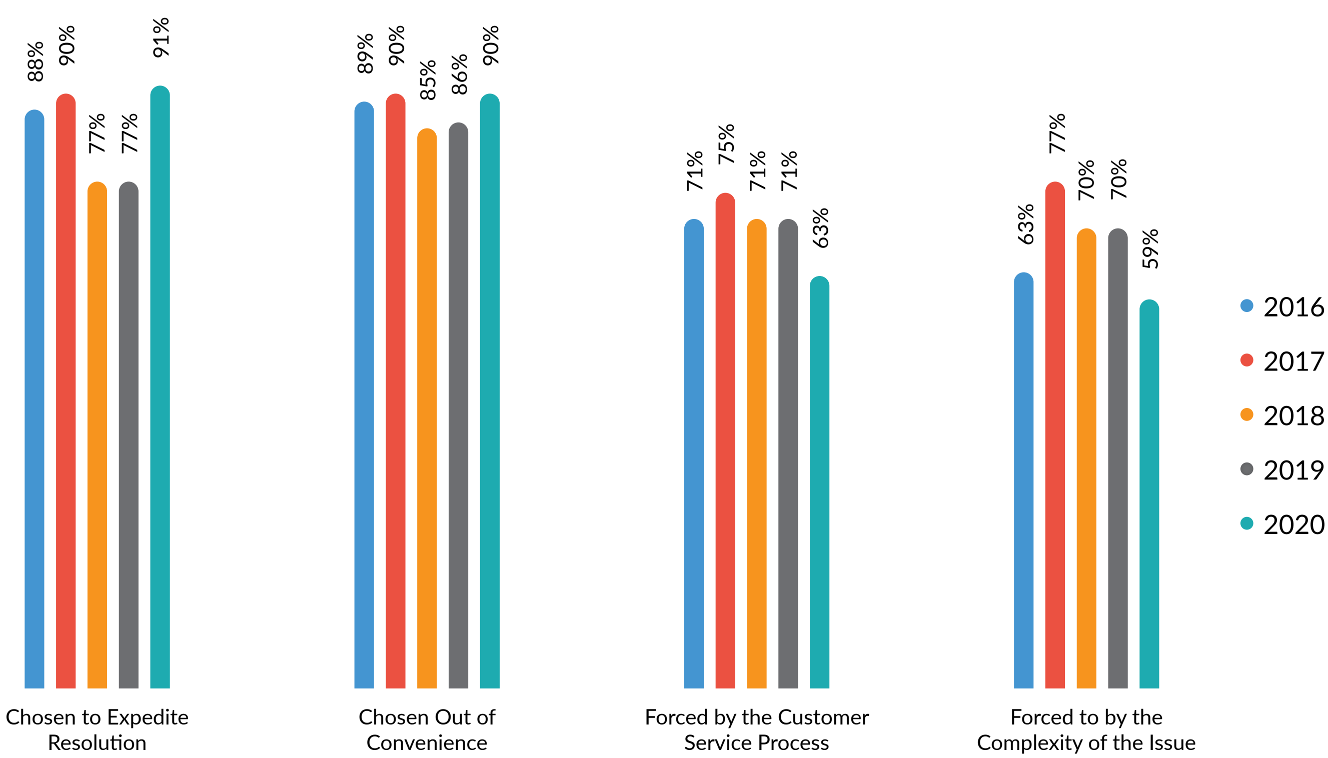
Significant Finding

When the customer is forced to follow a multichannel journey due to the customer care process, their issues are resolved much less often than when they choose to use multiple channels, as seen in the following chart.

Was your issue ultimately resolved?



Percentage of Consumers Who Had Their Issue(s) Resolved as a Result of Their Multichannel Journey



Issue resolution is much worse when customers are forced to use multiple channels through either service design (the customer care process) or issue complexity.

The patterns have remained quite similar over the last five years.

It is interesting to note that the percentage of consumers who had their issues resolved when forced to use a multichannel journey seems to be reducing.

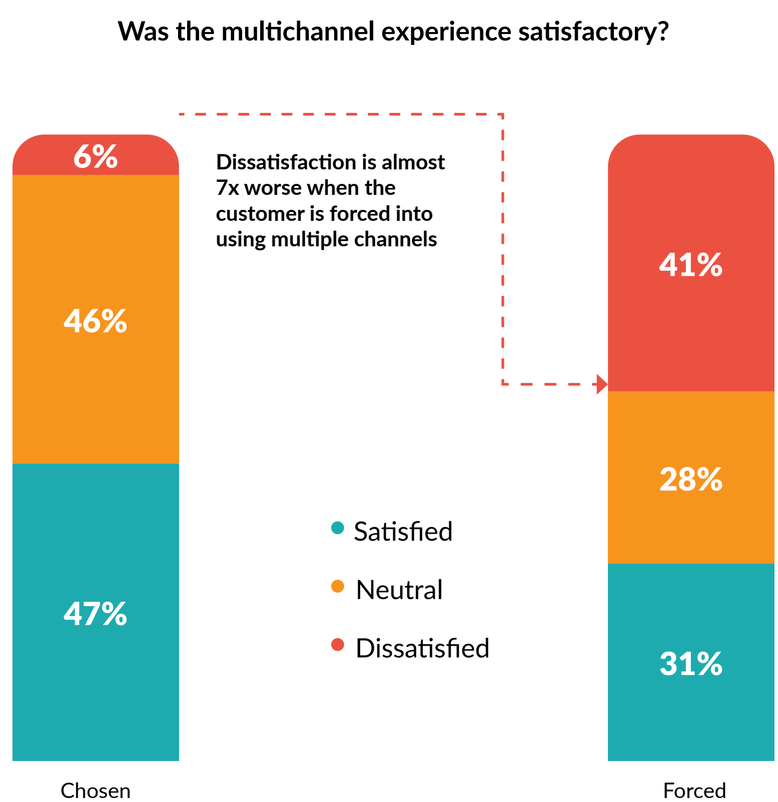
Multichannel Interactions

Multichannel Resolution and Satisfaction

Significant Finding

Issue resolution is much worse when customers are forced to use multiple channels through either service design (the customer care process) or issue complexity.

This has a knock-on effect on customer satisfaction as well, evident in the next chart.



Significant Finding

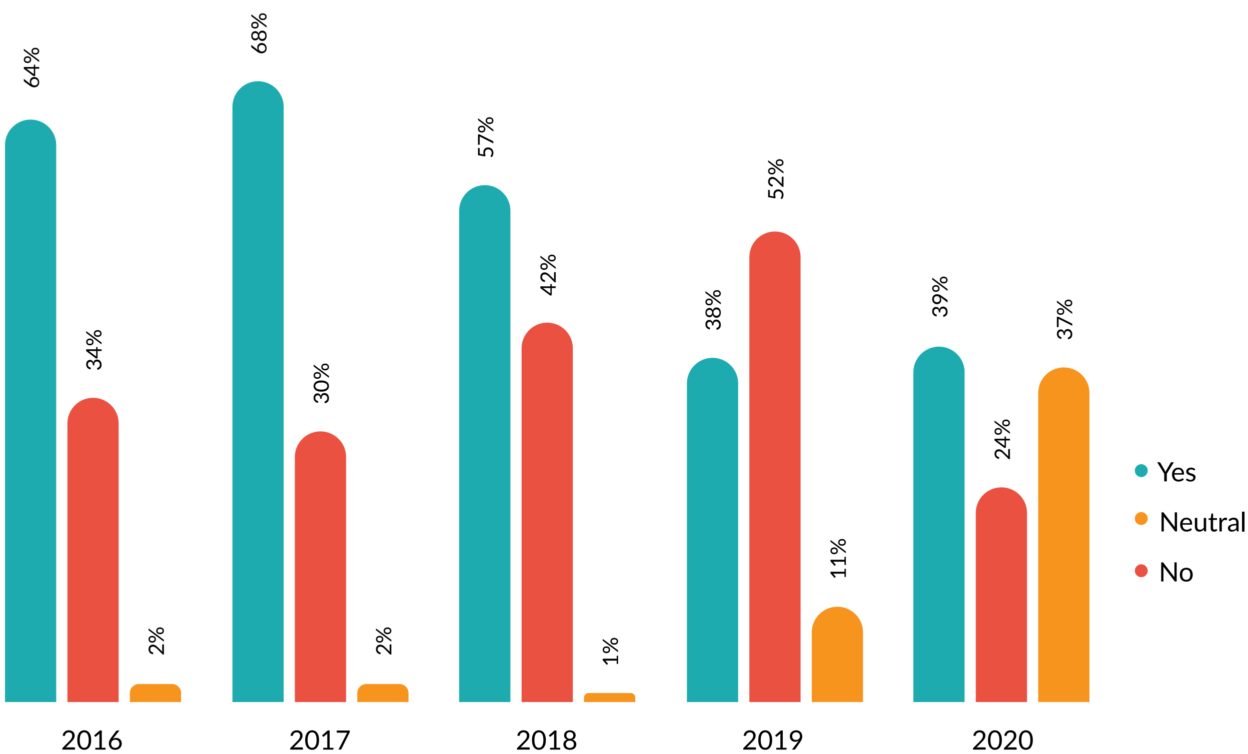
When customers are "forced" to use multiple channels, they are much more dissatisfied with the service journey than they are when they "choose" to use multiple channels.

This satisfaction result is closely linked to the reduced issue resolution rates when customers are forced into using multiple channels.

Multichannel Interactions

Multichannel Resolution and Satisfaction

Was the multichannel experience satisfactory?



Although dissatisfaction with multichannel experiences seems to have reduced, this has translated into more customers seemingly being “neutral” about their experience.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Survey Results

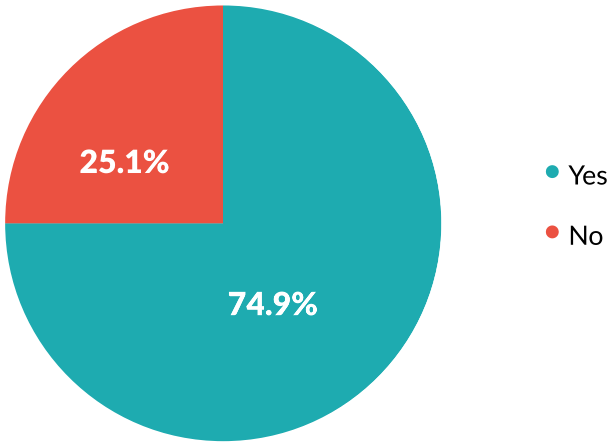
- Self-Service Technology Use
- Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 255 responses across the data points.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

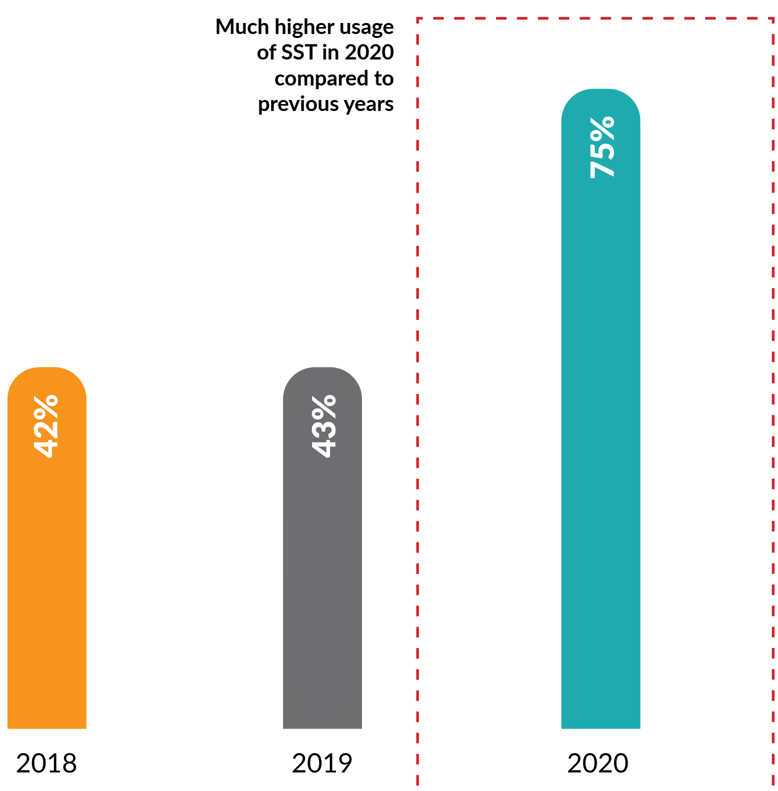
Self-Service Technology Use

Have you attempted to use Self-Service Technology (e.g. website, mobile app, chatbot, kiosk, etc.) to resolve a customer care or technical support issue in the past three months?



Almost three quarters of consumers surveyed attempted to use SST to resolve an issue in the previous three months.

Percentage who used Self-Service Technology in the Last Three Months



Significant Finding

The reported use of SST has increased year-over-year, with almost twice as many consumers stating they had tried to use SST to resolve their issues in 2020 compared to the previous years.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

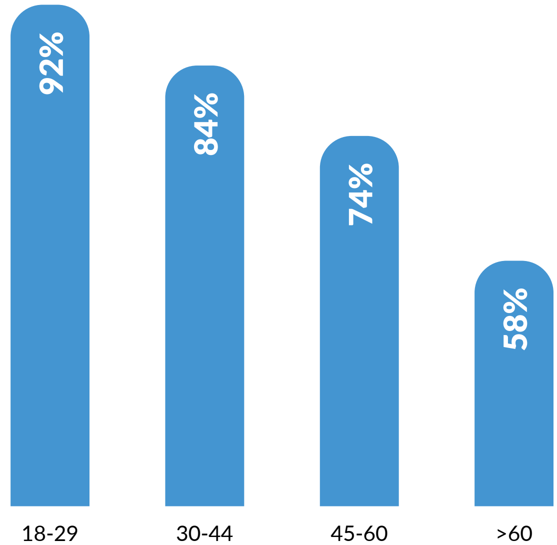
Self-Service Technology Use

Significant Finding

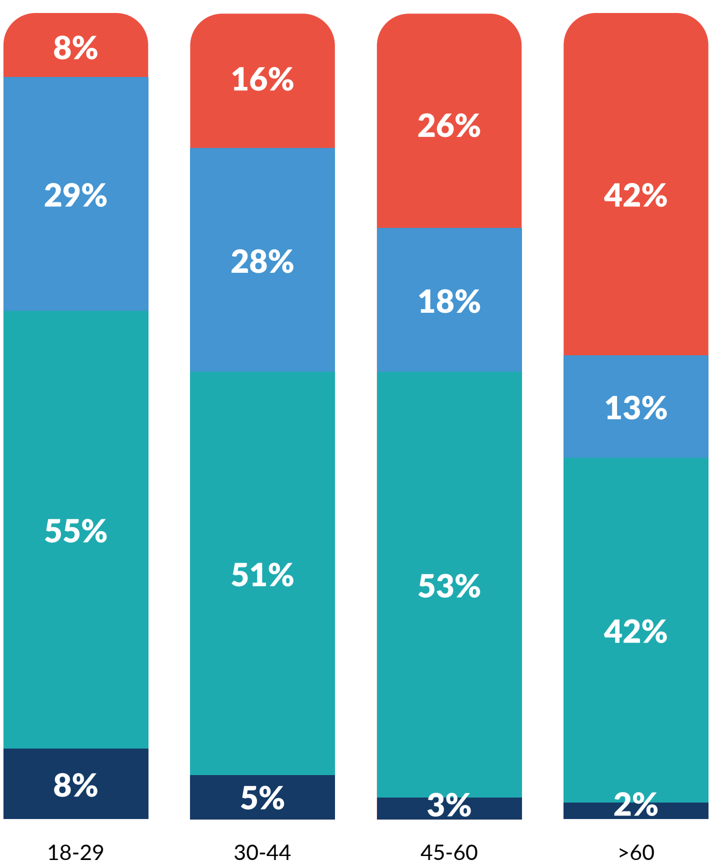
Younger consumers (18-29) were almost twice as likely to attempt to resolve their issues using SST compared to consumers over the age of 60.

This is reflective of the general population's usage and acceptance of technology, but indicates that in future years, SST adoption will be much higher.

Attempted Use of SST (by age)



Did you attempt to resolve your inquiry using Self-Service Technology?



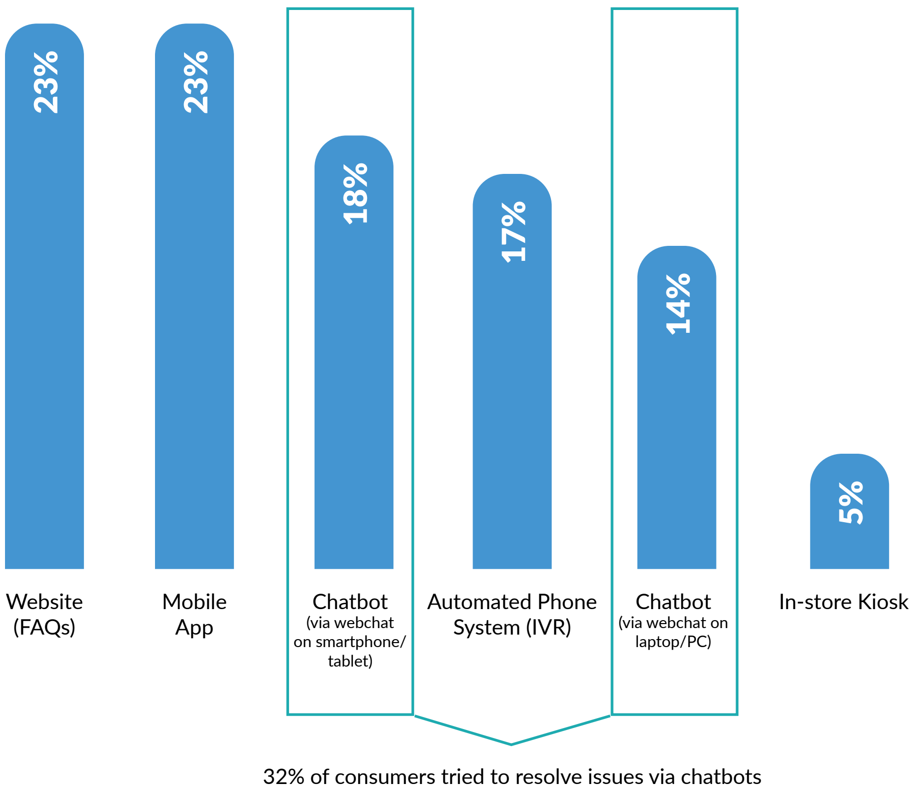
When we looked in more detail at where consumers were turning to resolve their issues, we found that very few consumers tried to resolve their issue via third-party websites. The companies' own websites and mobile applications were much more popular choices for SST usage.

- Yes, on a different website
- Yes, on their website
- Yes, on their app
- No

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Self-Service Technology Use

Thinking about your most recent issue, which of the following Self-Service Technologies did you try to use to resolve your issue?



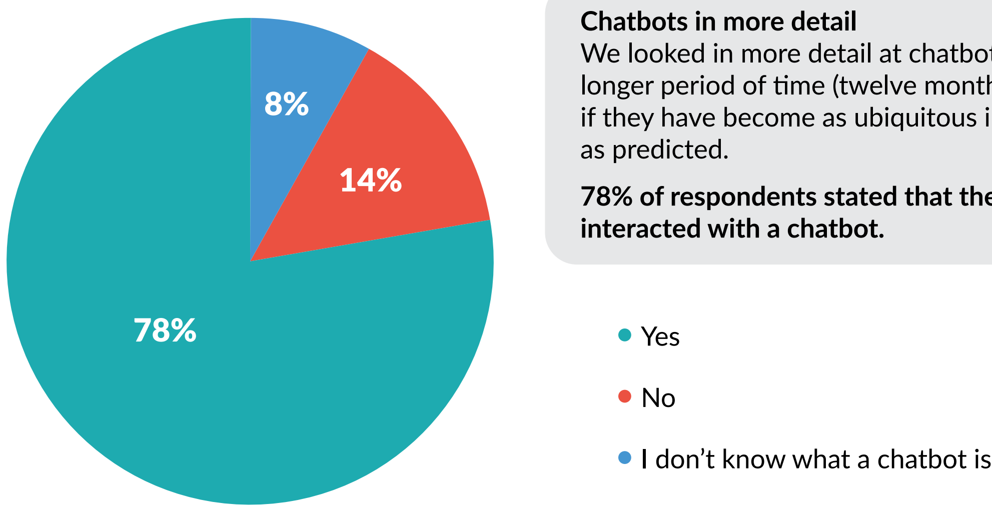
Significant Finding

Across all consumers, the **most common SST being used were websites and mobile applications.**

32% of consumers stated that they had SST interactions via a chatbot either via a smartphone, tablet, or laptop/PC.

Chatbots are increasingly being used by brands, but they are not yet delivering high levels of issue resolution or customer satisfaction (when compared to other Self-Service Technologies).

Have you interacted with a chatbot when contacting a brand's customer care department?



Chatbots in more detail
We looked in more detail at chatbot usage across a longer period of time (twelve months) to determine if they have become as ubiquitous in the industry as predicted.

78% of respondents stated that they had interacted with a chatbot.

Overall, how satisfied were you with your chatbot interaction?

Significant Finding

Chatbot satisfaction is low.

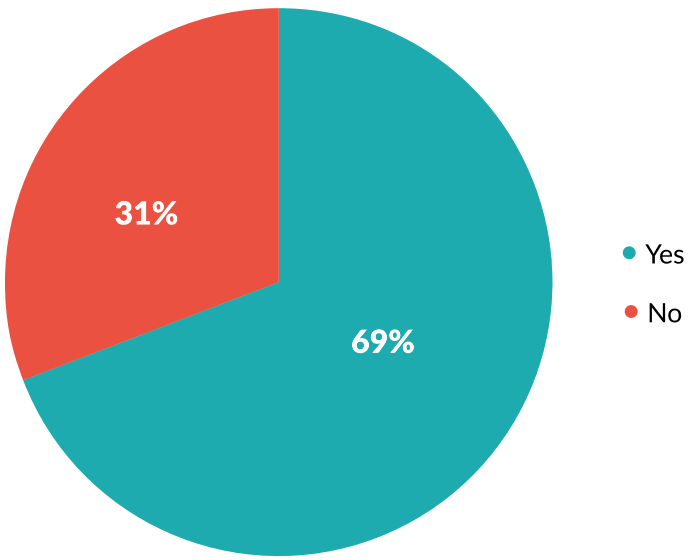
Satisfaction with chatbots is generally low, with **only 50% of respondents stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with their chatbot experience.**

One in three consumers were actively dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their chatbot experiences.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

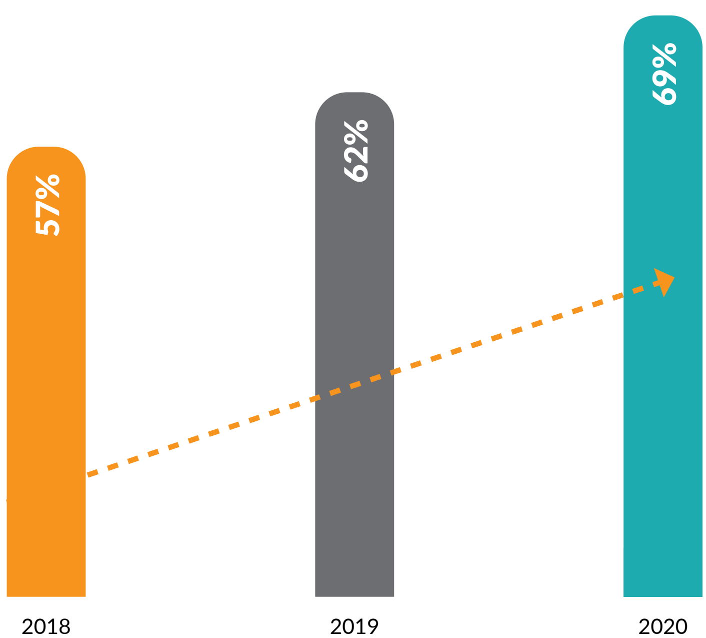
Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

Was your issue resolved via the Self-Service Technology?



Issue resolution via SST was low, at only 69%.

Percentage of Customers Able to Resolve Issue via Self-Service Technology



Significant Finding

Although issue resolution via SST was low (at 69%), the rate has improved compared to previous years.

The research data does not provide a definitive answer to "why" this is increasing, but the increase in issue resolution may be due to factors such as:

- Customers becoming increasingly comfortable with using SST
- Brands taking more time and care to design better self-service customer experiences

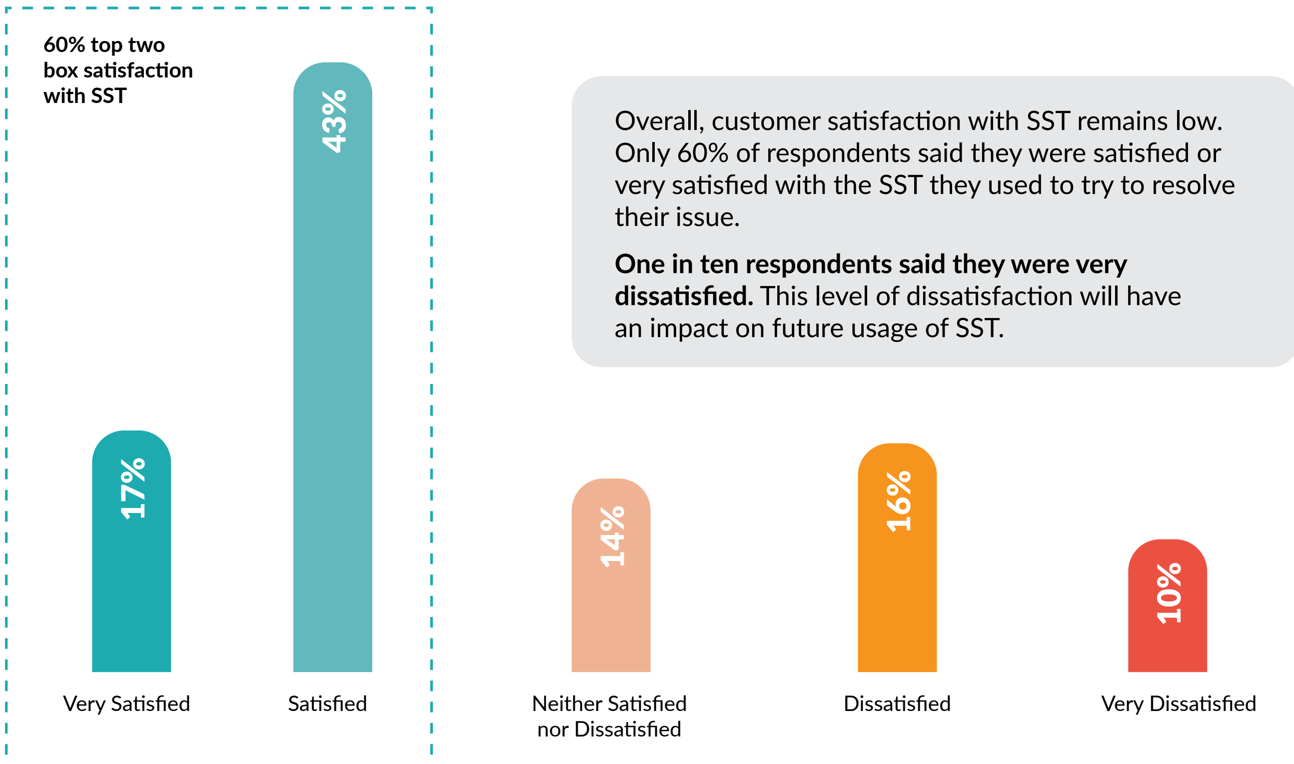
Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

Overall, how satisfied were you with the Self-Service Technology you used to try to resolve your issue?

Overall, customer satisfaction with SST remains low. Only 60% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the SST they used to try to resolve their issue.

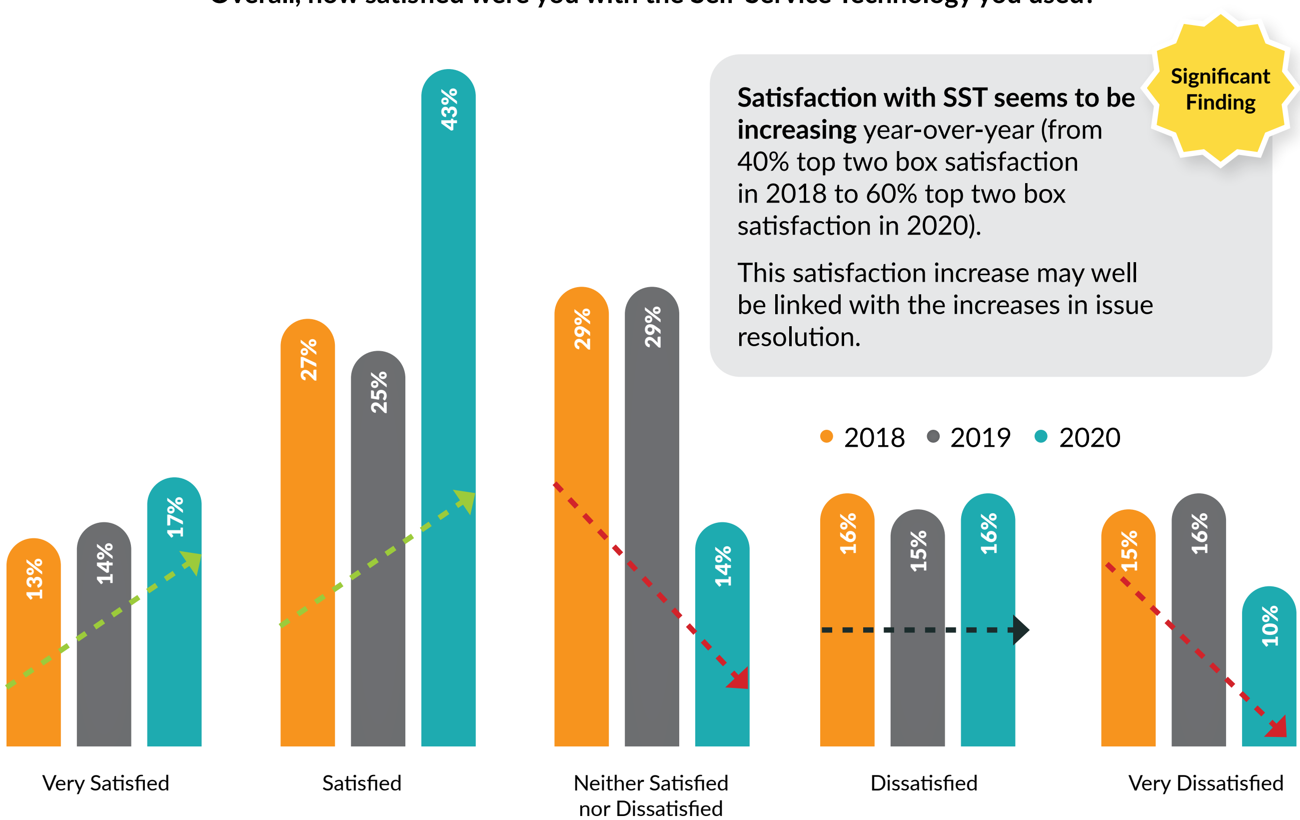
One in ten respondents said they were very dissatisfied. This level of dissatisfaction will have an impact on future usage of SST.



Overall, how satisfied were you with the Self-Service Technology you used?

Satisfaction with SST seems to be increasing year-over-year (from 40% top two box satisfaction in 2018 to 60% top two box satisfaction in 2020).

This satisfaction increase may well be linked with the increases in issue resolution.



Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

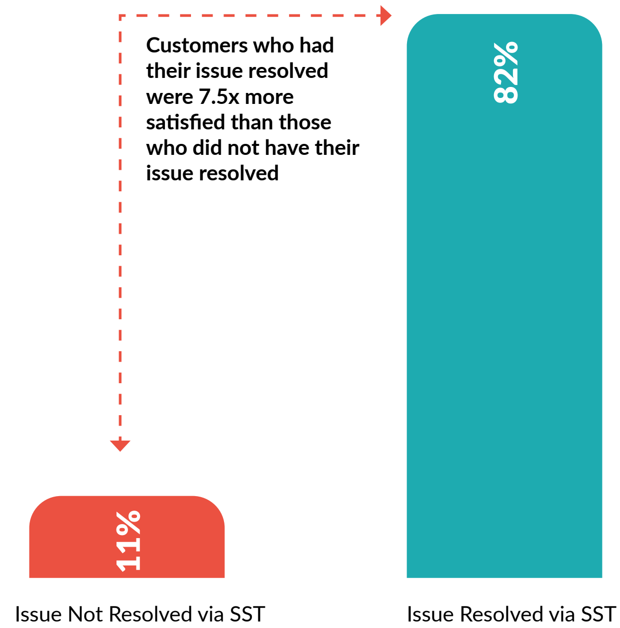
Significant Finding

Issue resolution is vital in driving customer satisfaction.

The biggest driver of customer satisfaction with SST was the ability to resolve the issue.

Customers who reported having their issue resolved were 7.5x more satisfied with SST than customers who did not have their issue resolved.

Customer Satisfaction if Issue is Not Resolved



Net Promoter Score if Issue is Not Resolved

Issue resolution via SST has a significant impact on Net Promoter Score.

Consumers who did not have their issue resolved via SST had a 5X worse Net Promoter Score than those who did have their issues resolved.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

Significant Finding

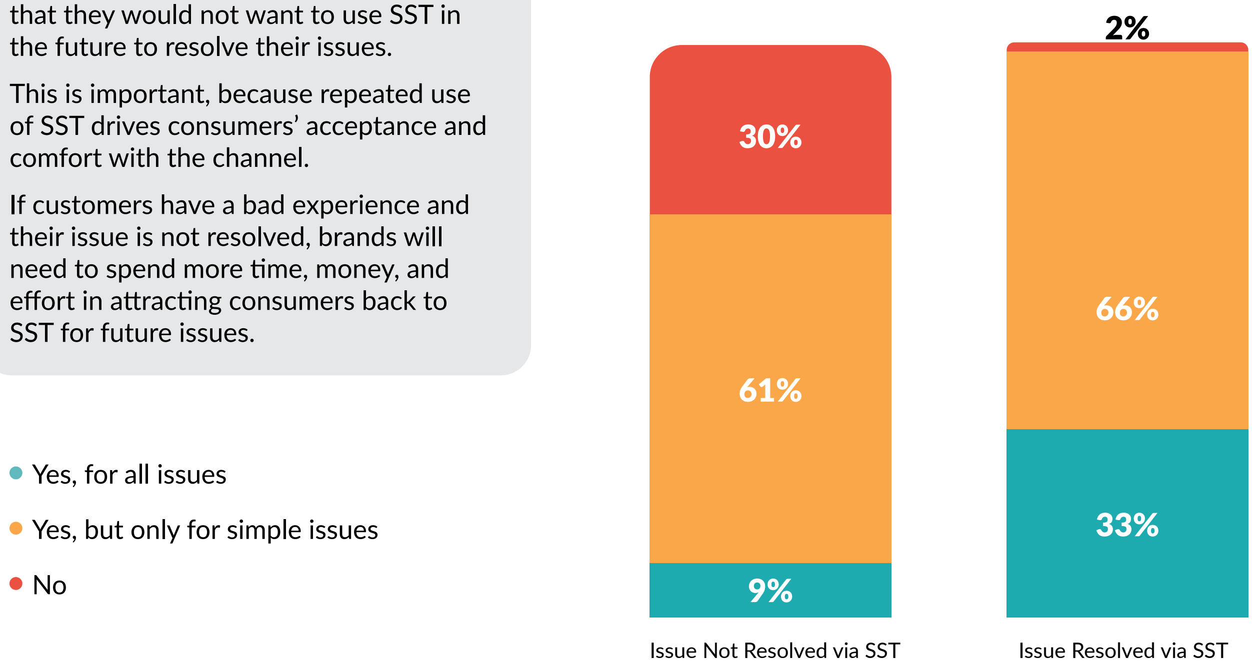
Issue resolution is vital in driving further usage of SST.

Customers who did not have their issue resolved were **15x** more likely to say that they would not want to use SST in the future to resolve their issues.

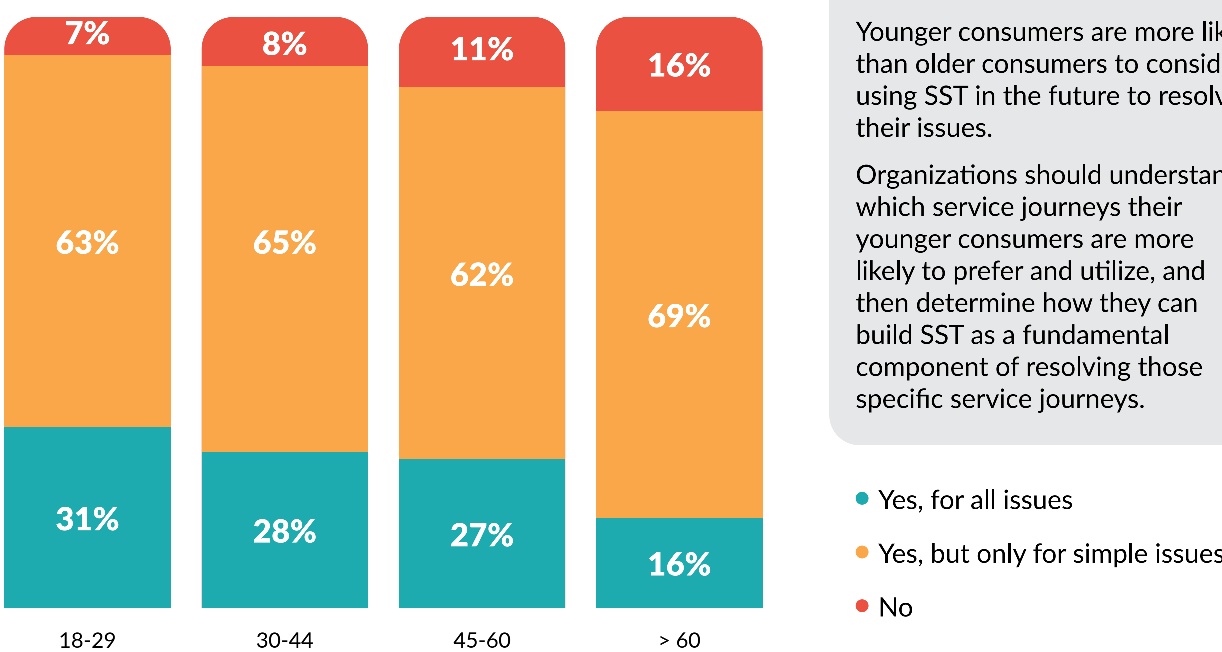
This is important, because repeated use of SST drives consumers' acceptance and comfort with the channel.

If customers have a bad experience and their issue is not resolved, brands will need to spend more time, money, and effort in attracting consumers back to SST for future issues.

Would you be happy using Self-Service Technology to resolve your customer care or technical support issues in the future?



Would you be happy using Self-Service Technology to resolve your customer care or technical support issues in the future?



Age is also a variable which impacts SST usage.

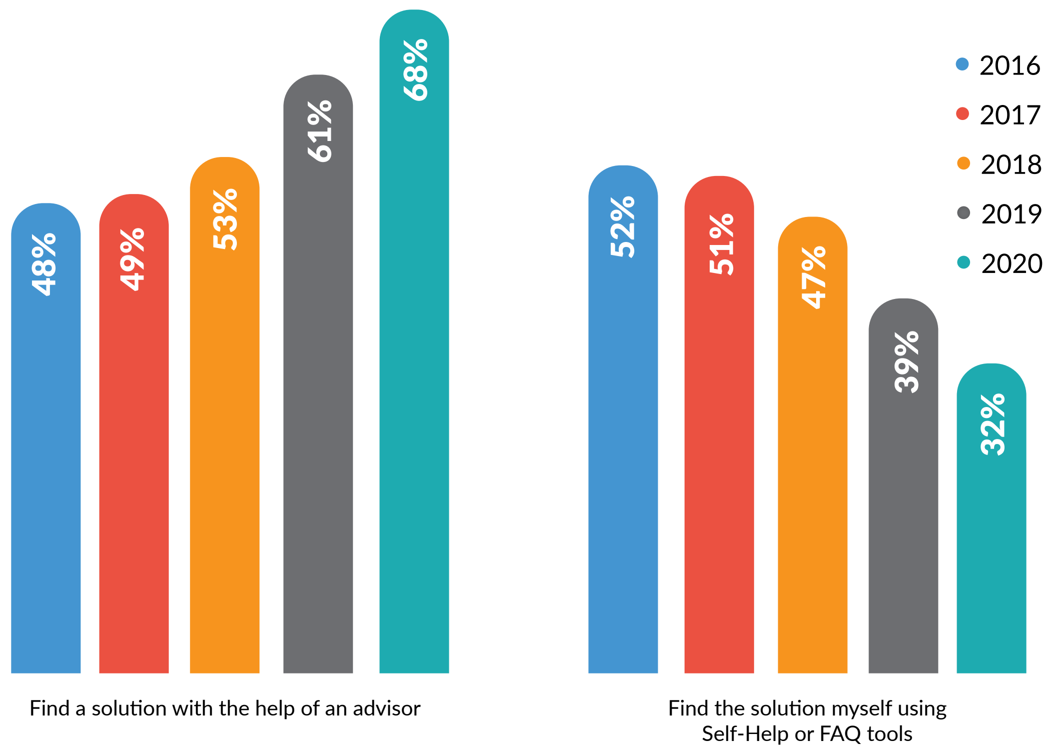
Younger consumers are more likely than older consumers to consider using SST in the future to resolve their issues.

Organizations should understand which service journeys their younger consumers are more likely to prefer and utilize, and then determine how they can build SST as a fundamental component of resolving those specific service journeys.

Consumer Experiences with Self-Service Technology (SST)

Self-Service Resolution and Satisfaction

If you knew your customer care issue would be resolved, which scenario sounds more appealing to you?



While the survey findings indicate that consumers have turned to SST in greater numbers this year than ever before, it seems as though **consumers would ideally like to have human contact when resolving their issues**.

In fact, there is a trended increase in the amount of people stating that they would want their issue resolved with the assistance of an agent, rather than via SST.

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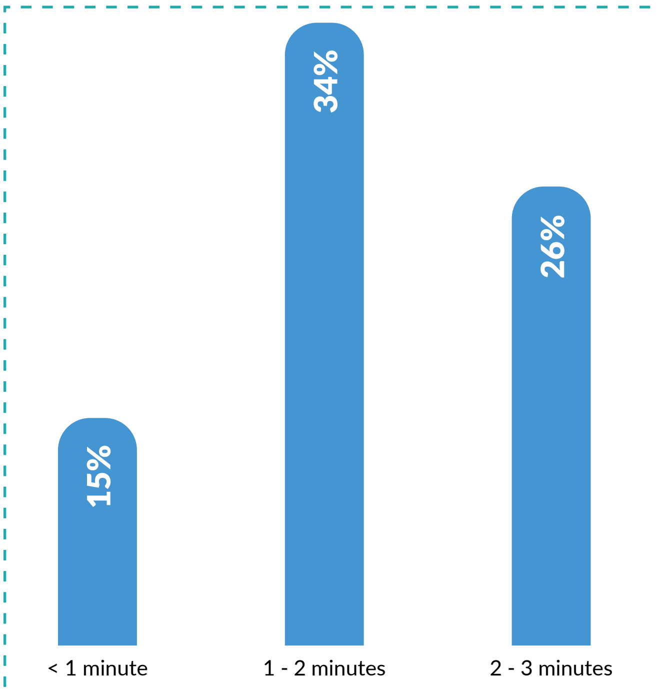
Consumer Expectations about Speed of Answer

Survey Results

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 240 responses across the data points.

Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by phone, how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via **phone**.

15% of consumers stated they would expect their call to be answered within one minute, another 34% expected their call to be answered between 1-2 minutes, and another 26% expected their call to be answered between 2-3 minutes.

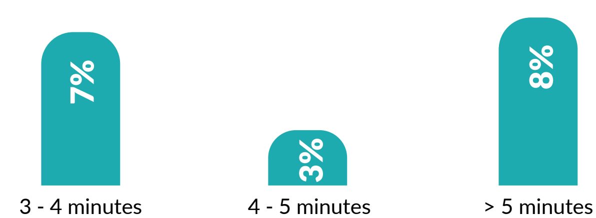
25% of consumers expect to wait longer than three minutes to get a response via phone.

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by online chat (e.g. via your desktop/laptop computer), how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?

We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via **online chat (desktop/laptop)**.

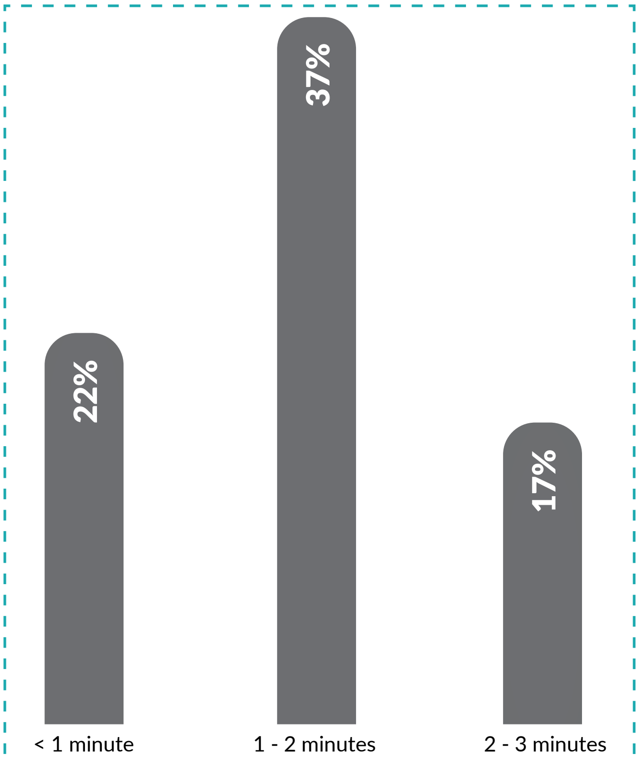
26% of consumers stated they would expect their chat request to be answered within one minute, another 33% expect their chat to be answered between 1-2 minutes, and another 24% expect their chat to be answered between 2-3 minutes.

18% of consumers expect to wait longer than three minutes to get a response via online chat.



Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by mobile chat (e.g. via your smartphone/tablet), how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?

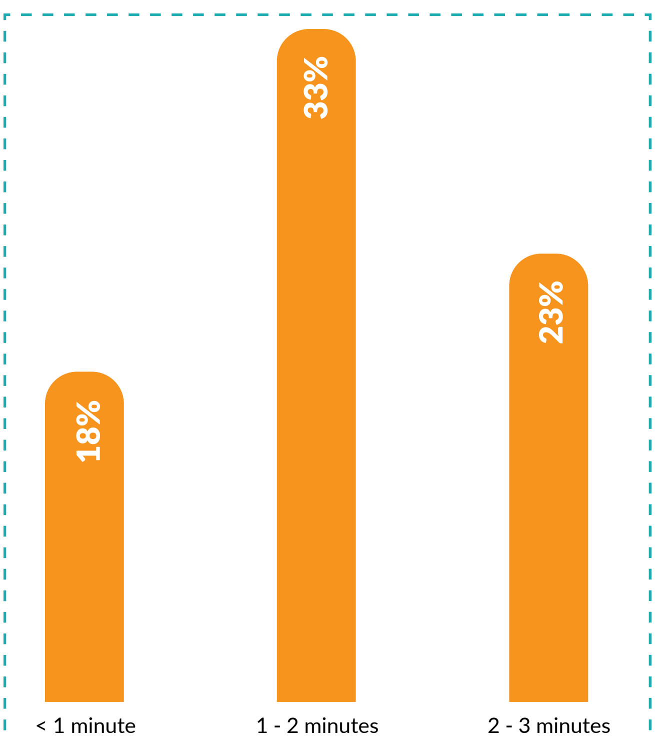


We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via **mobile chat (smartphone/tablet)** agent before getting an answer.

22% of consumers stated they would expect their mobile chat request to be answered within one minute, 37% expect their chat to be answered between 1-2 minutes, and another 17% expect their chat to be answered in between 2-3 minutes.

23% of consumers expect to wait longer than three minutes to get a response via mobile chat.

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by video chat how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



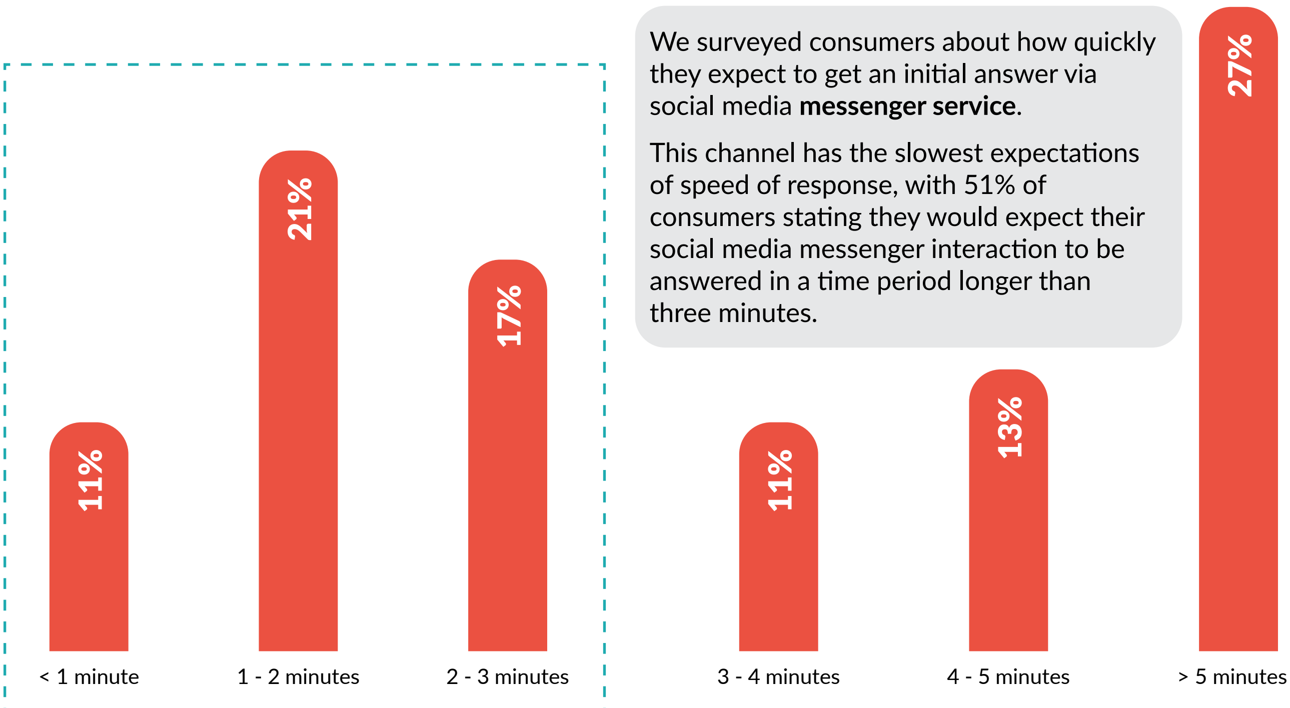
We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via **video chat** before getting an answer.

18% expect an answer within one minute and 33% expect an answer between 1-2 minutes.

28% of consumers stated they would expect to wait longer than three minutes to have their video chat request answered.

Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

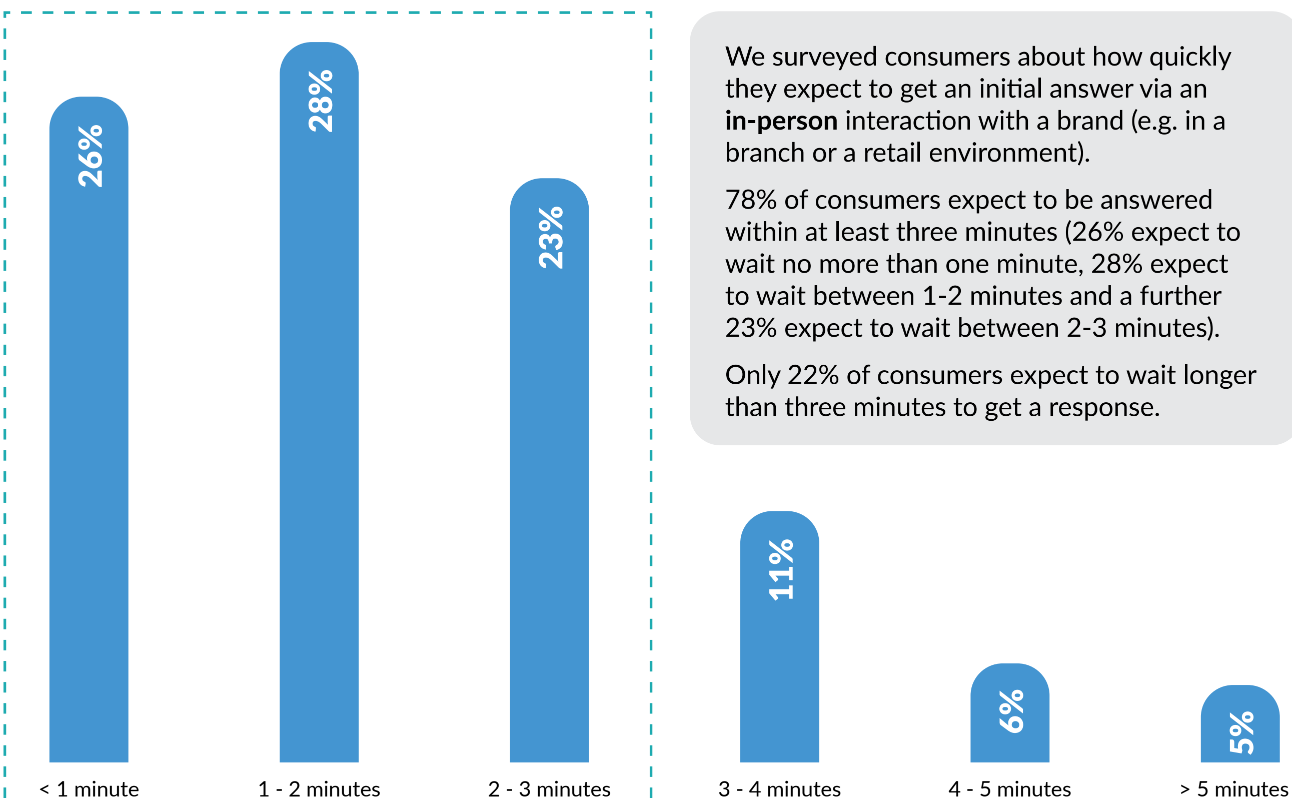
When interacting with a brand's customer care department by social media messenger service (e.g. Facebook Messenger) how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via social media **messenger service**.

This channel has the slowest expectations of speed of response, with 51% of consumers stating they would expect their social media messenger interaction to be answered in a time period longer than three minutes.

When interacting with a brand's customer care department in-person (e.g. in a branch or retail environment), how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



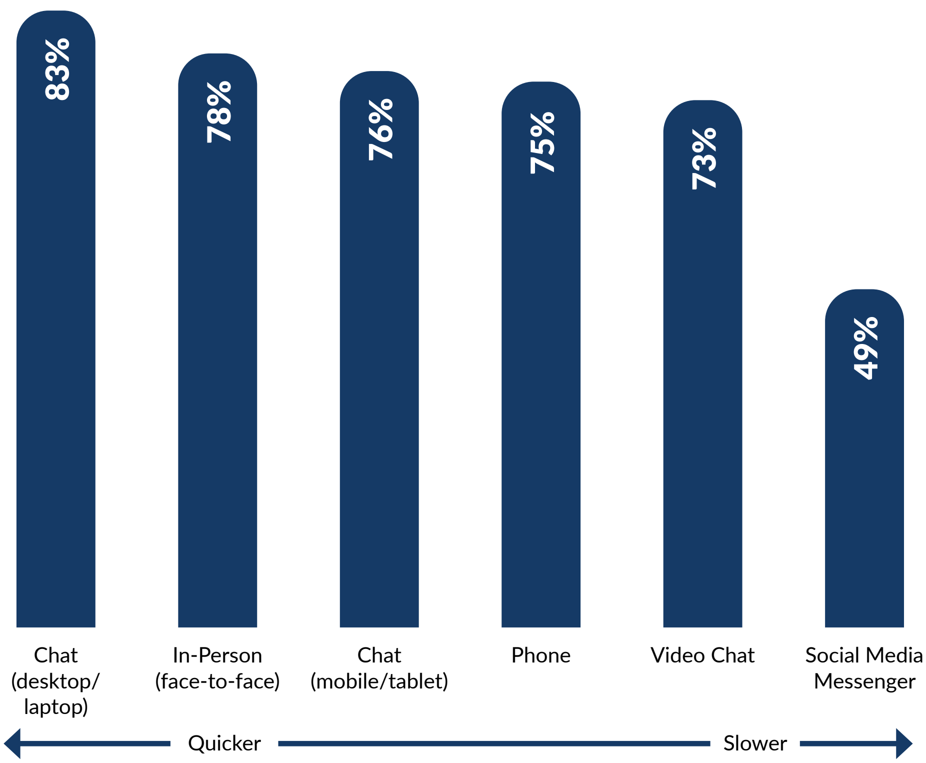
We surveyed consumers about how quickly they expect to get an initial answer via an **in-person** interaction with a brand (e.g. in a branch or a retail environment).

78% of consumers expect to be answered within at least three minutes (26% expect to wait no more than one minute, 28% expect to wait between 1-2 minutes and a further 23% expect to wait between 2-3 minutes).

Only 22% of consumers expect to wait longer than three minutes to get a response.

Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

Percentage of Consumers Expecting to be Answered within Three Minutes



Significant Finding

We surveyed consumers on their expectations about how long they would ideally wait before getting an answer.

This chart looks at expectations for answering "real-time" transactions within three minutes.

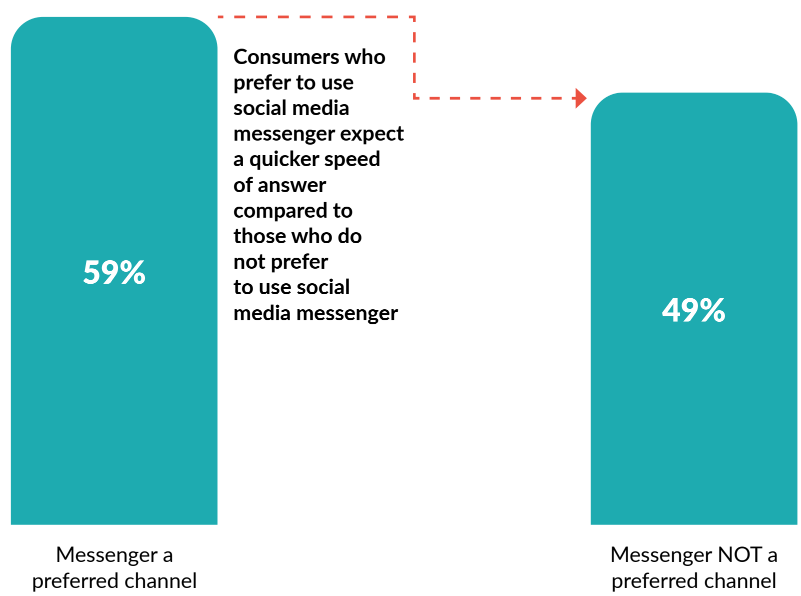
Consumers expect fastest response times for the chat (desktop/ laptop) channel.

Consumers expect slower response times for inquiries via the social media messenger channel.

Percentage of Consumers Expecting to be Answered within Three Minutes

The findings indicate that the experience of using channels can change consumers' perception about how responsive businesses should be about those specific channels.

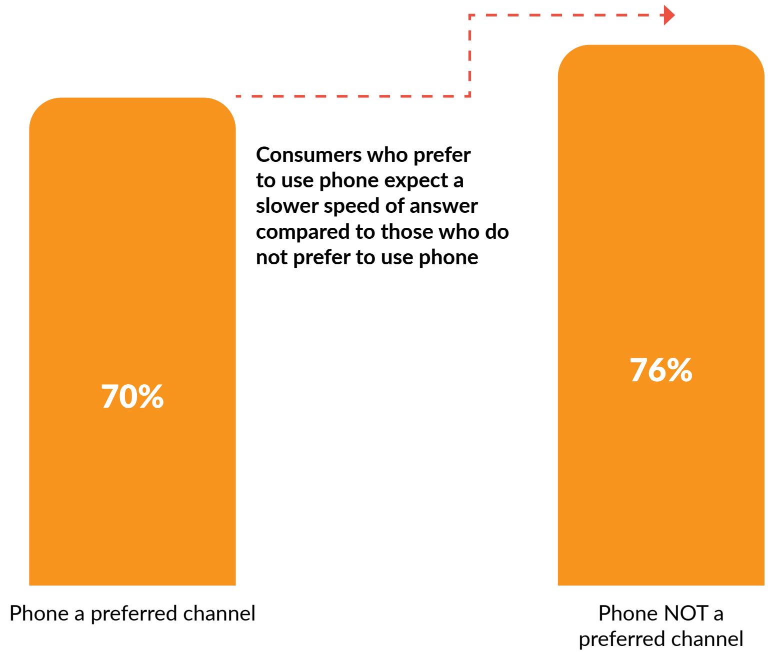
For example, consumers who prefer to use social media messenger services expect a QUICKER speed of answer compared to those who do not prefer to use social media messenger services.



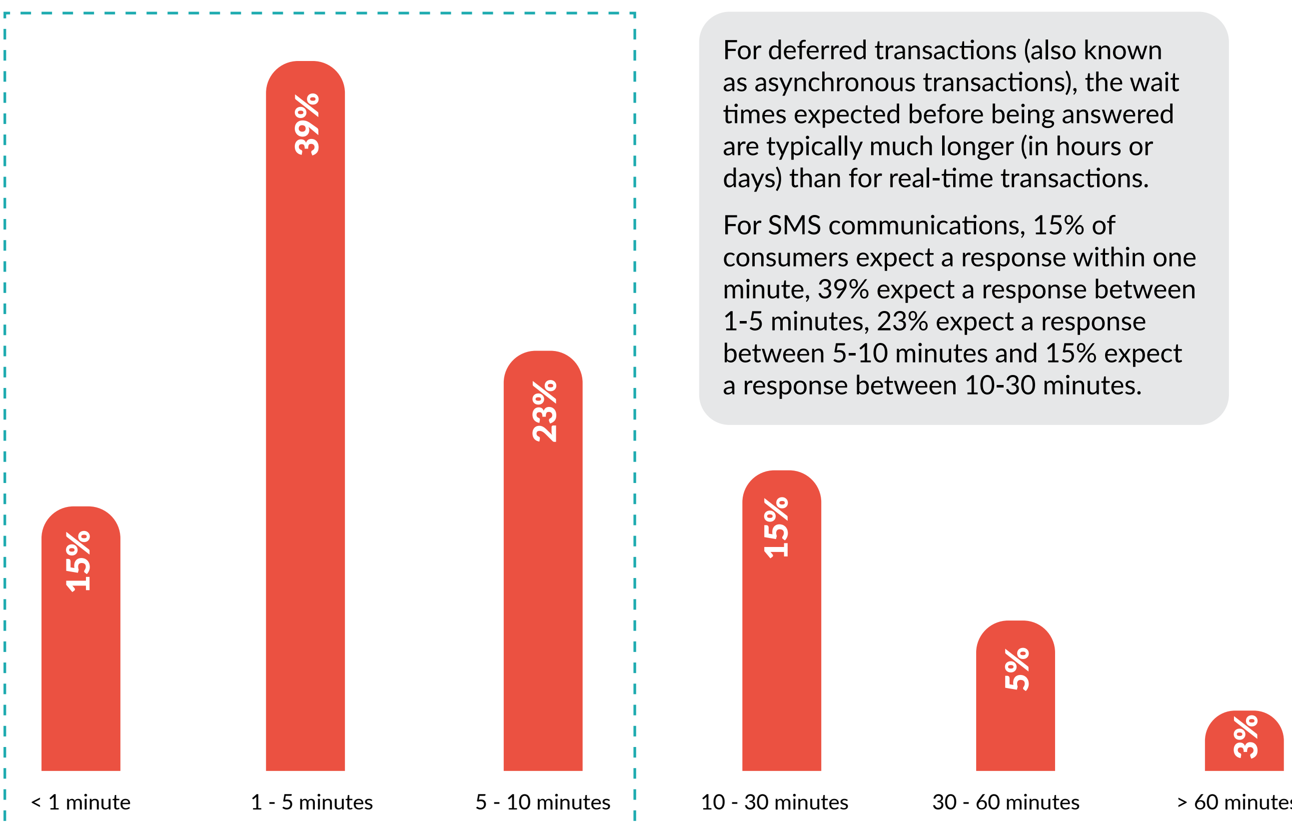
Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

Interestingly, the survey also found that consumers who prefer to use the phone expect a SLOWER speed of answer compared to those who do not prefer to use the phone.

Percentage of Consumers Expecting to be Answered within Three Minutes



When interacting with a brand's customer care department by SMS how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?

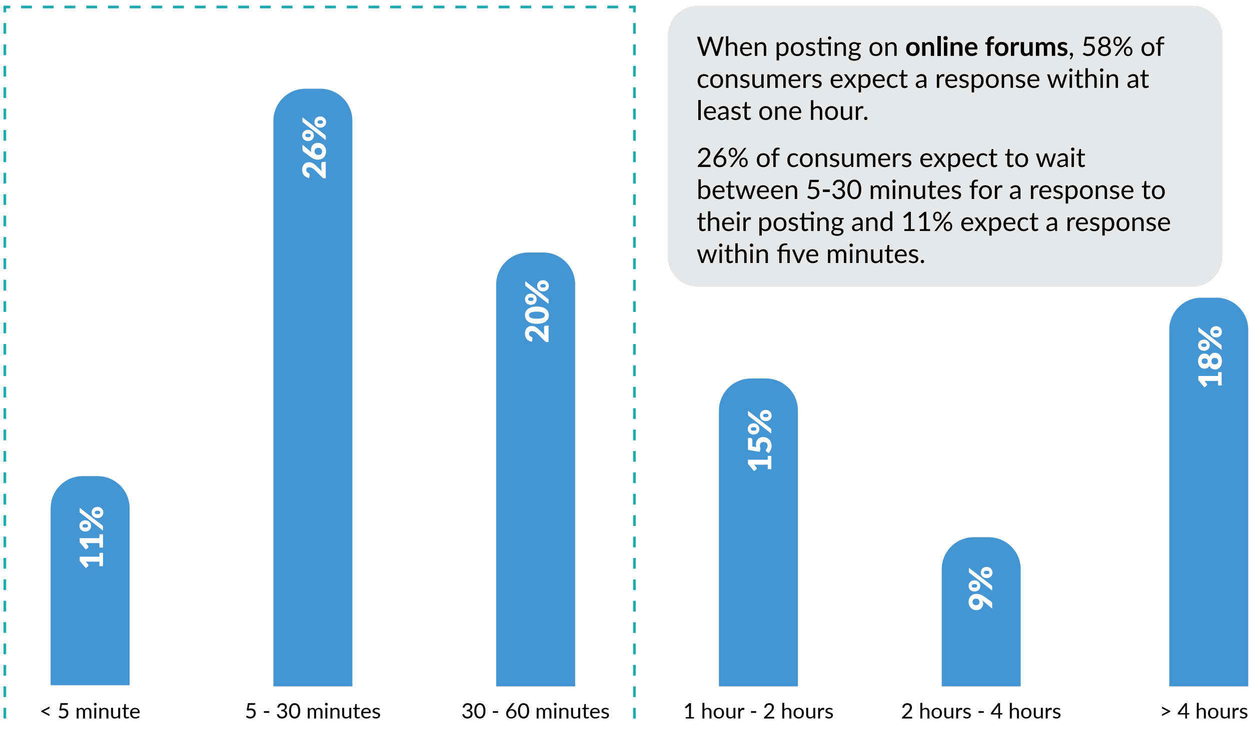


For deferred transactions (also known as asynchronous transactions), the wait times expected before being answered are typically much longer (in hours or days) than for real-time transactions.

For SMS communications, 15% of consumers expect a response within one minute, 39% expect a response between 1-5 minutes, 23% expect a response between 5-10 minutes and 15% expect a response between 10-30 minutes.

Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

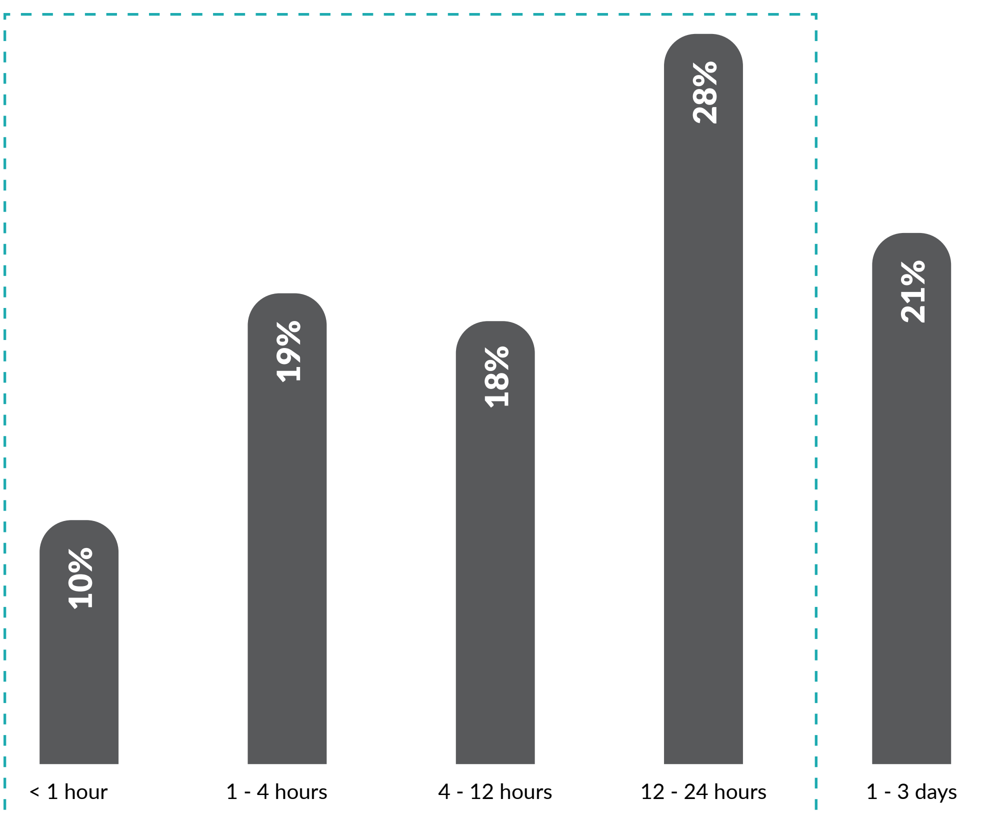
When interacting with a brand's customer care department by posting on an online forum/message board, how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



When posting on **online forums**, 58% of consumers expect a response within at least one hour.

26% of consumers expect to wait between 5-30 minutes for a response to their posting and 11% expect a response within five minutes.

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by email, how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?

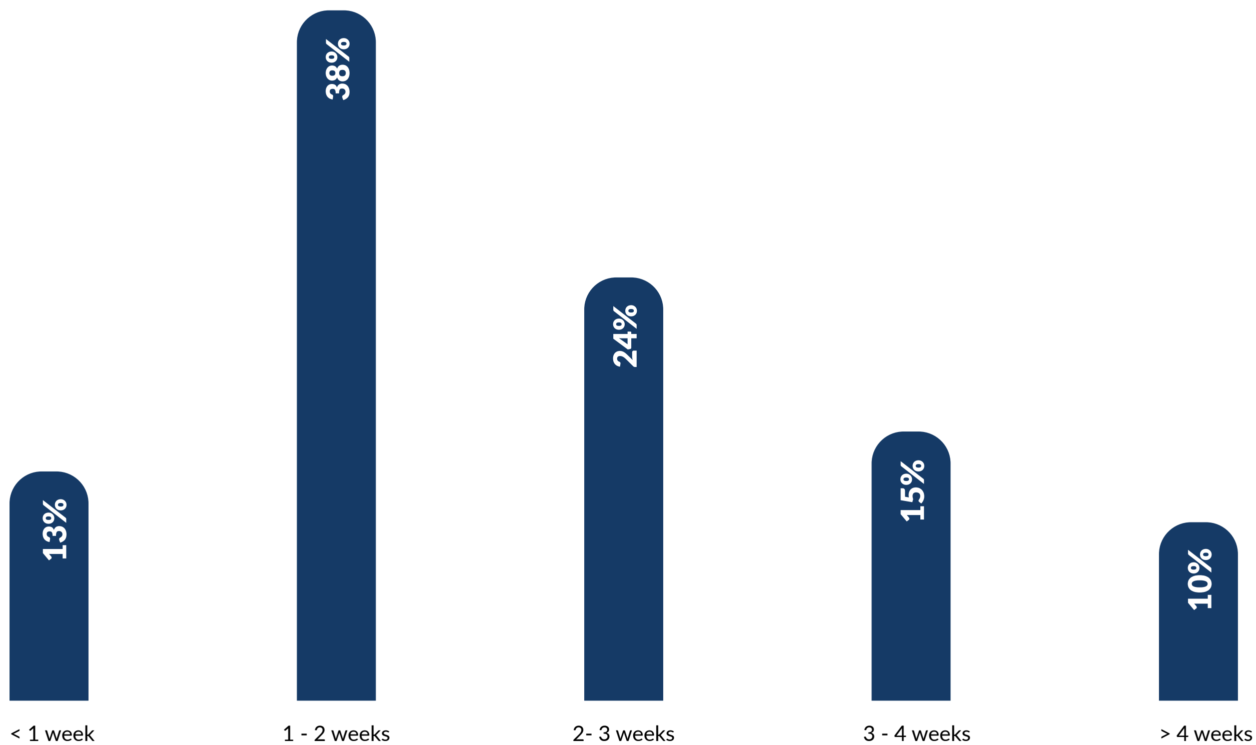


75% of consumers expect a response to **emails** within less than one day, but there is a large percentage of consumers who are expecting quicker responses to emails.

The survey found that one in ten consumers expect a response to their email within one hour and 19% expect a response between 1-4 hours after sending their email.

Consumer Expectations Regarding Speed of Answer

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by mail, how quickly do you expect them to initially answer your inquiry?



Very few consumers still communicate with brands via mail and when they do, they have the slowest expectation of responsiveness – typically weeks rather than days.

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Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Survey Results

- Channel Use and Preference
- Issue Resolution and Satisfaction
- Net Promoter Score
- Customer Effort

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 1034 responses across the data points.

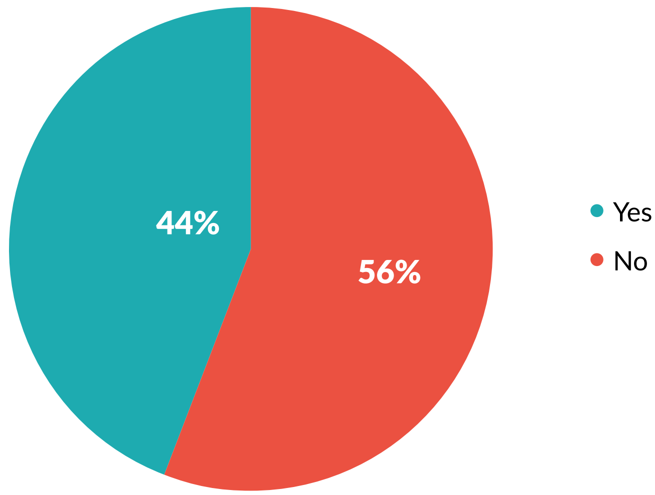
Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Channel Use and Preference

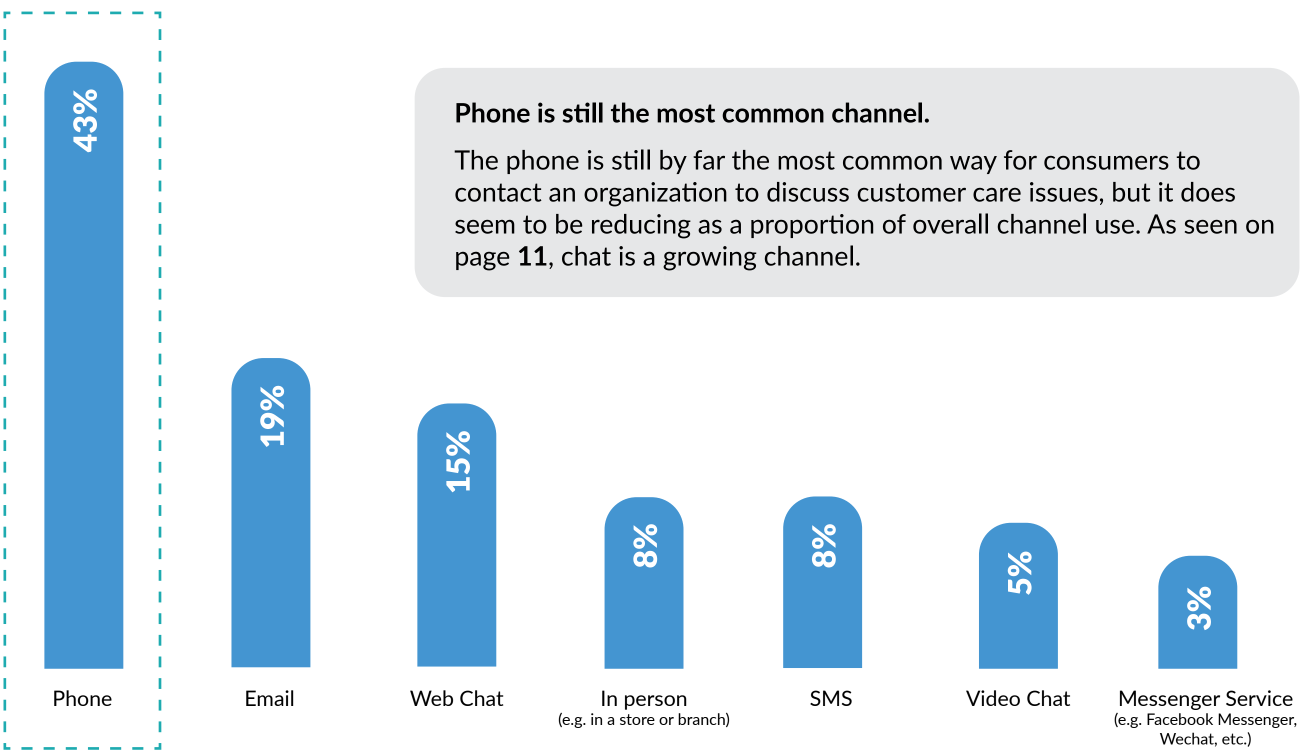
A large percentage of consumers have to contact a business with customer care questions each quarter.

44% of consumers we surveyed had contacted a customer care team in the most recent three months.

In the most recent three months, have you contacted a business with a customer care question?



Channels Used When Contacting Customer Care



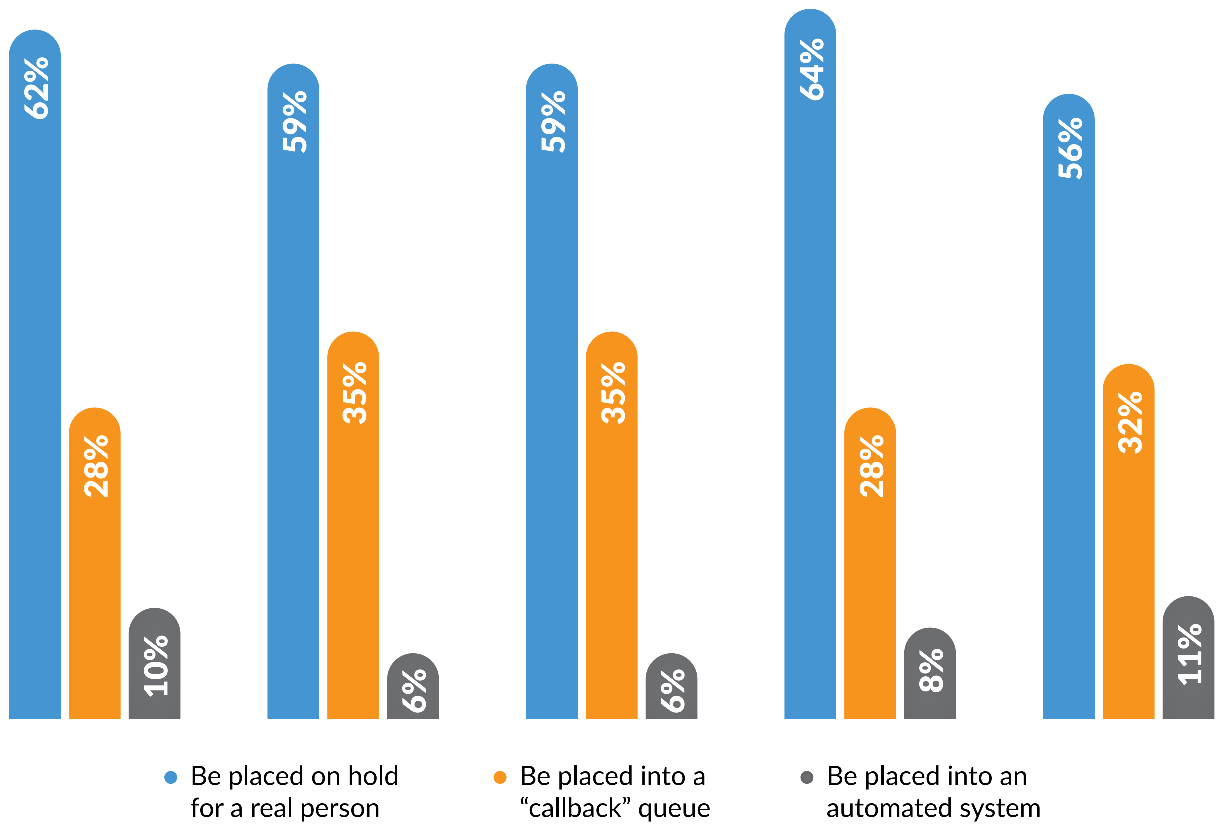
Phone is still the most common channel.

The phone is still by far the most common way for consumers to contact an organization to discuss customer care issues, but it does seem to be reducing as a proportion of overall channel use. As seen on page **11**, chat is a growing channel.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Channel Use and Preference

When interacting with a brand's customer care department by phone, which of the following options sounds the most appealing?



When consumers phone customer care, they would much **prefer to wait for a person** to speak to them, than to be placed into an automated system.

This number has slightly decreased in 2020, but it is still an overwhelming majority.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

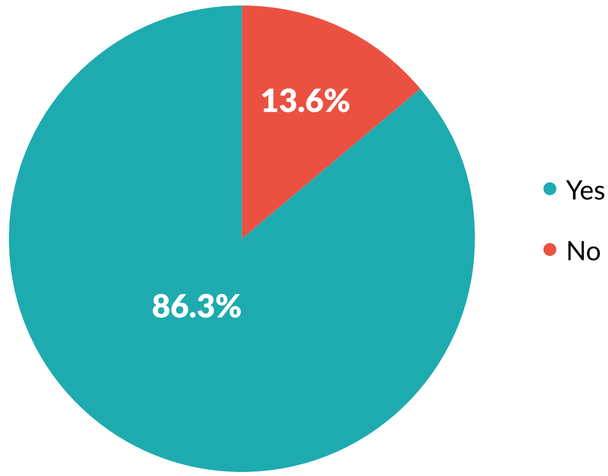
Issue Resolution and Satisfaction

Significant Finding

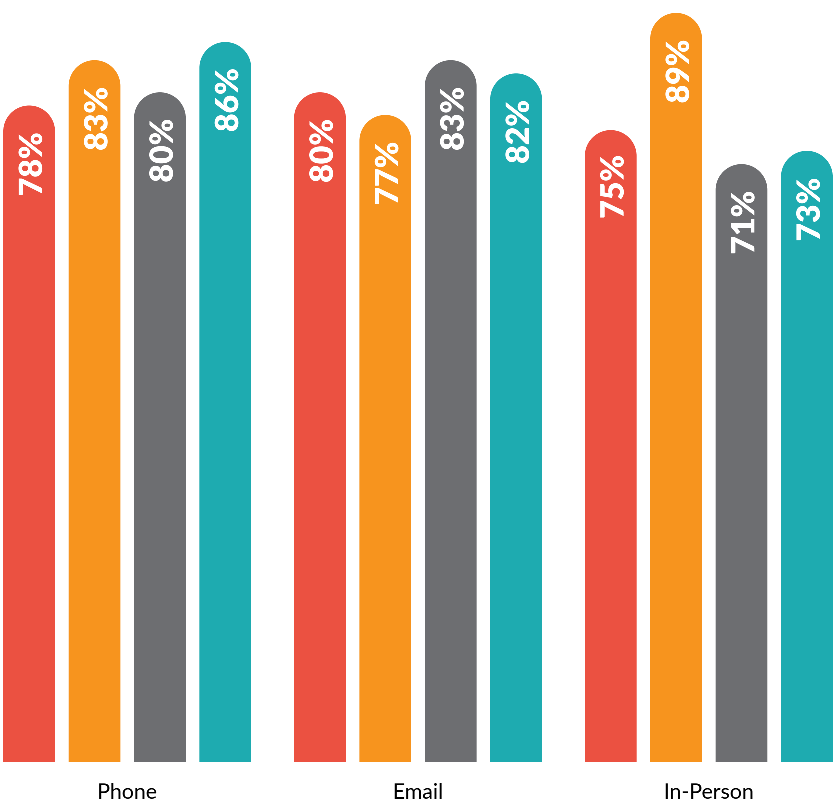
Assisted transactions have much higher resolution rates than unassisted transactions (via SST).

This may well be due to the synchronous nature of real-time assisted transactions where the customer and the agent can both ask probing questions to facilitate resolution. It may also be due to the limitations of SST.

Thinking specifically about your most recent customer care issue, has your issue been resolved?



Issue Resolution by Contact Channel



The survey looked in more depth at the issue resolution rates of three of the most common contact channels (phone, email, and in-person).

Issue resolution rates have typically remained in the 70%-85% range over the last four years (with phone and email having higher resolution rates than in-person inquiries).

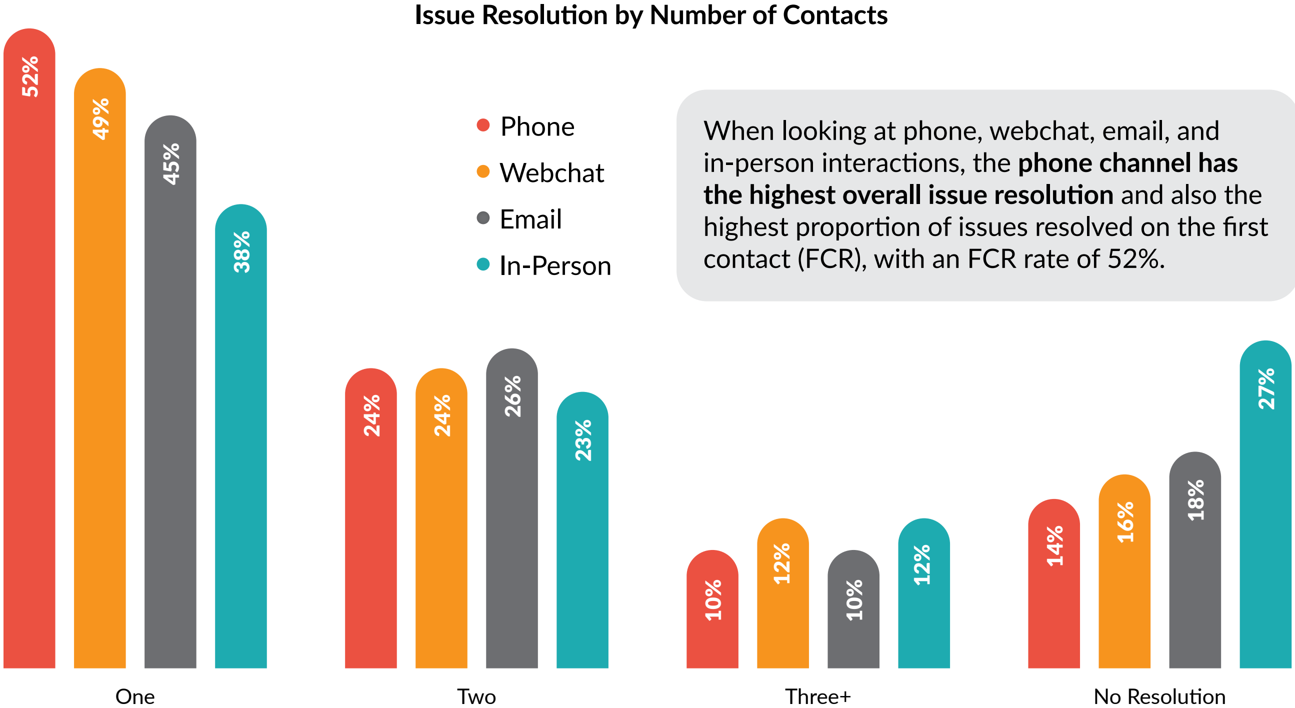
Issue resolution for human assisted channels is higher than it is for SST.

2017 2019
2018 2020

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

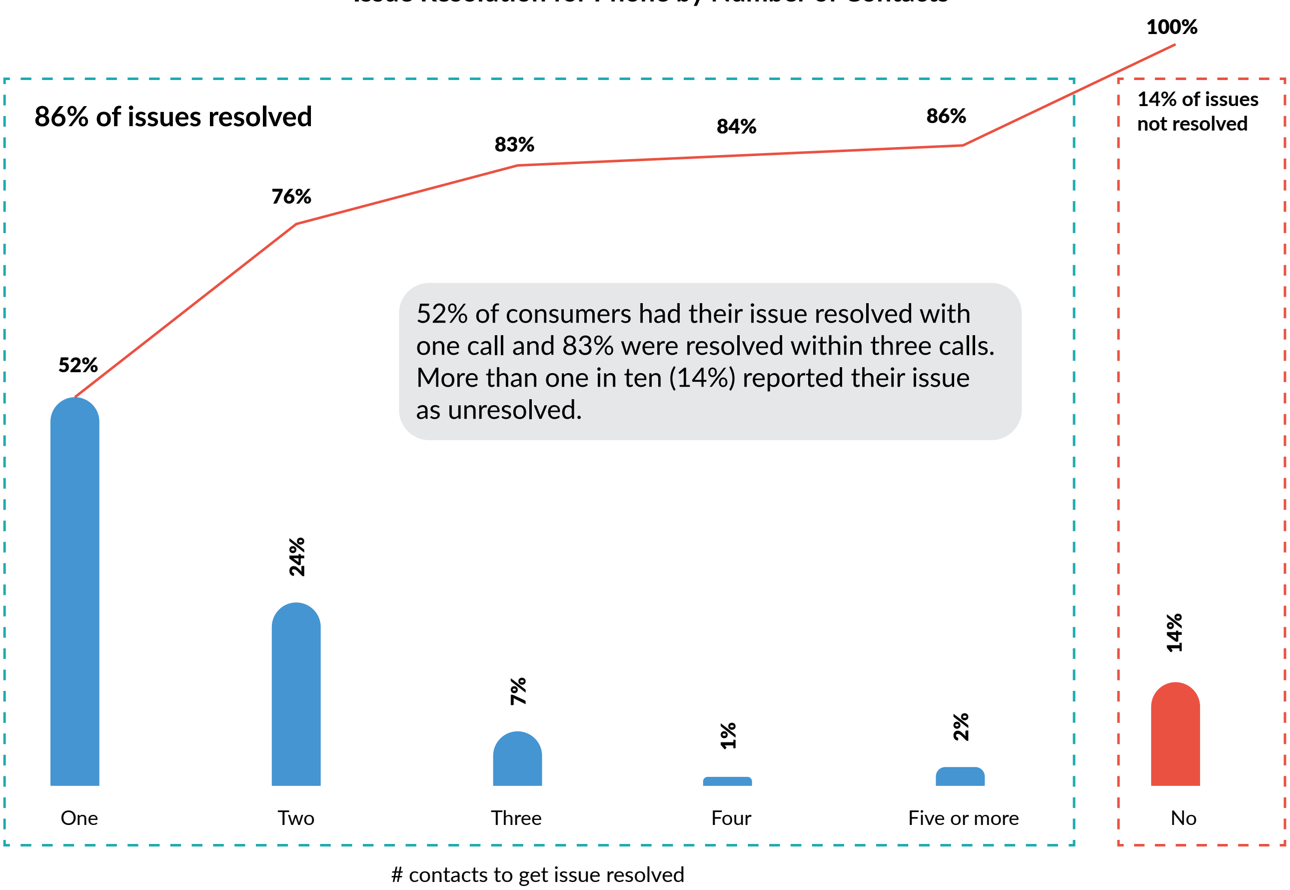
Issue Resolution and Satisfaction

Issue Resolution by Number of Contacts



When looking at phone, webchat, email, and in-person interactions, the **phone channel has the highest overall issue resolution** and also the highest proportion of issues resolved on the first contact (FCR), with an FCR rate of 52%.

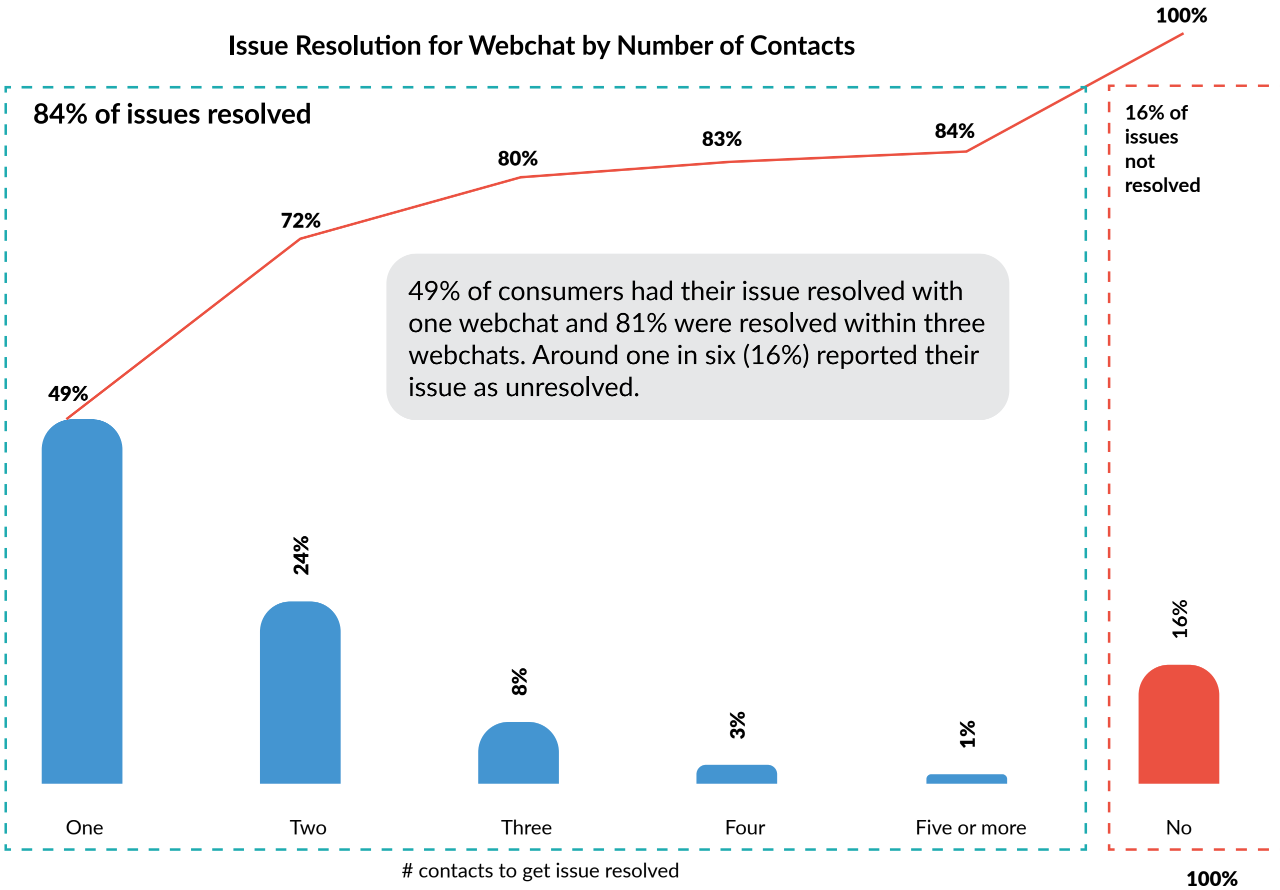
Issue Resolution for Phone by Number of Contacts

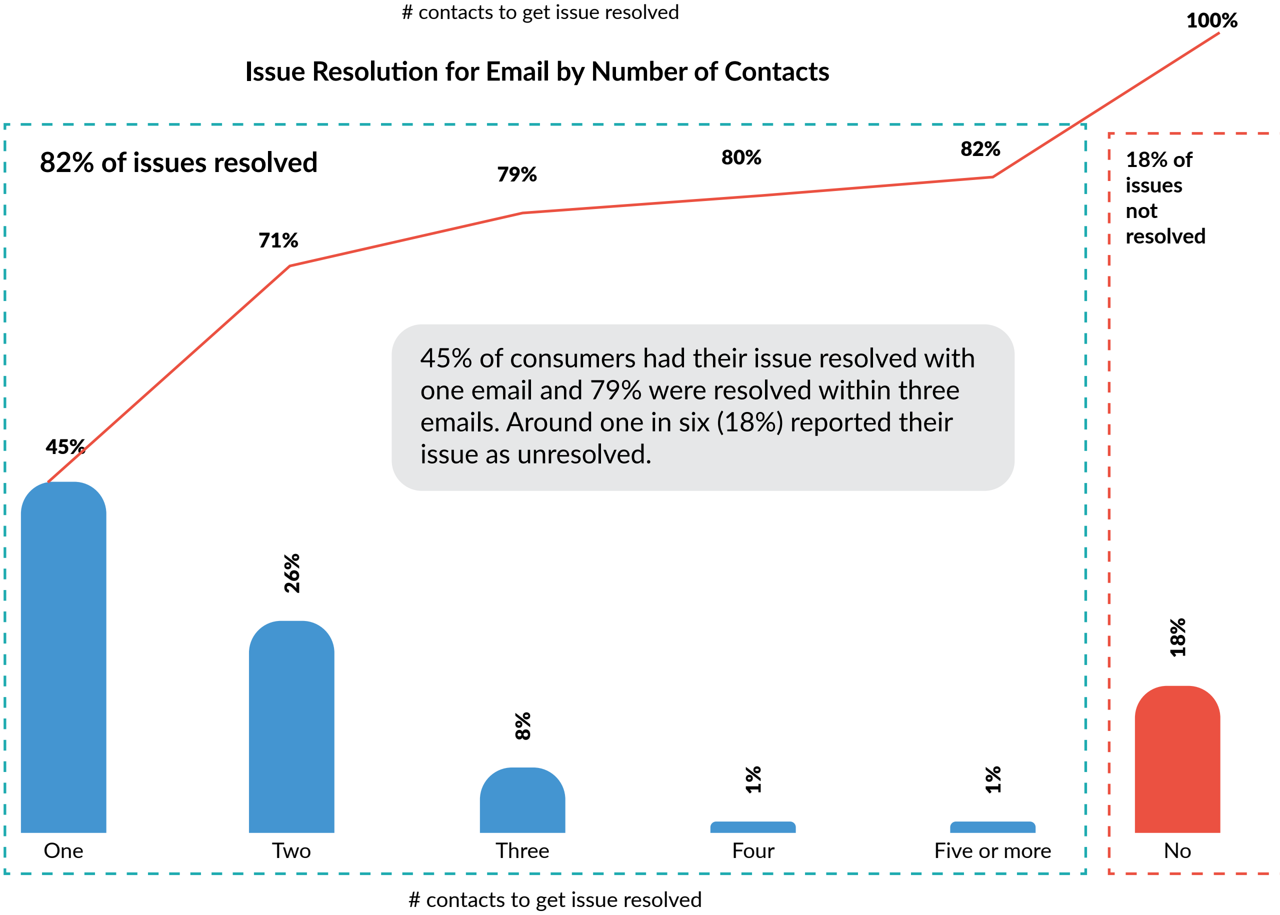


52% of consumers had their issue resolved with one call and 83% were resolved within three calls. More than one in ten (14%) reported their issue as unresolved.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

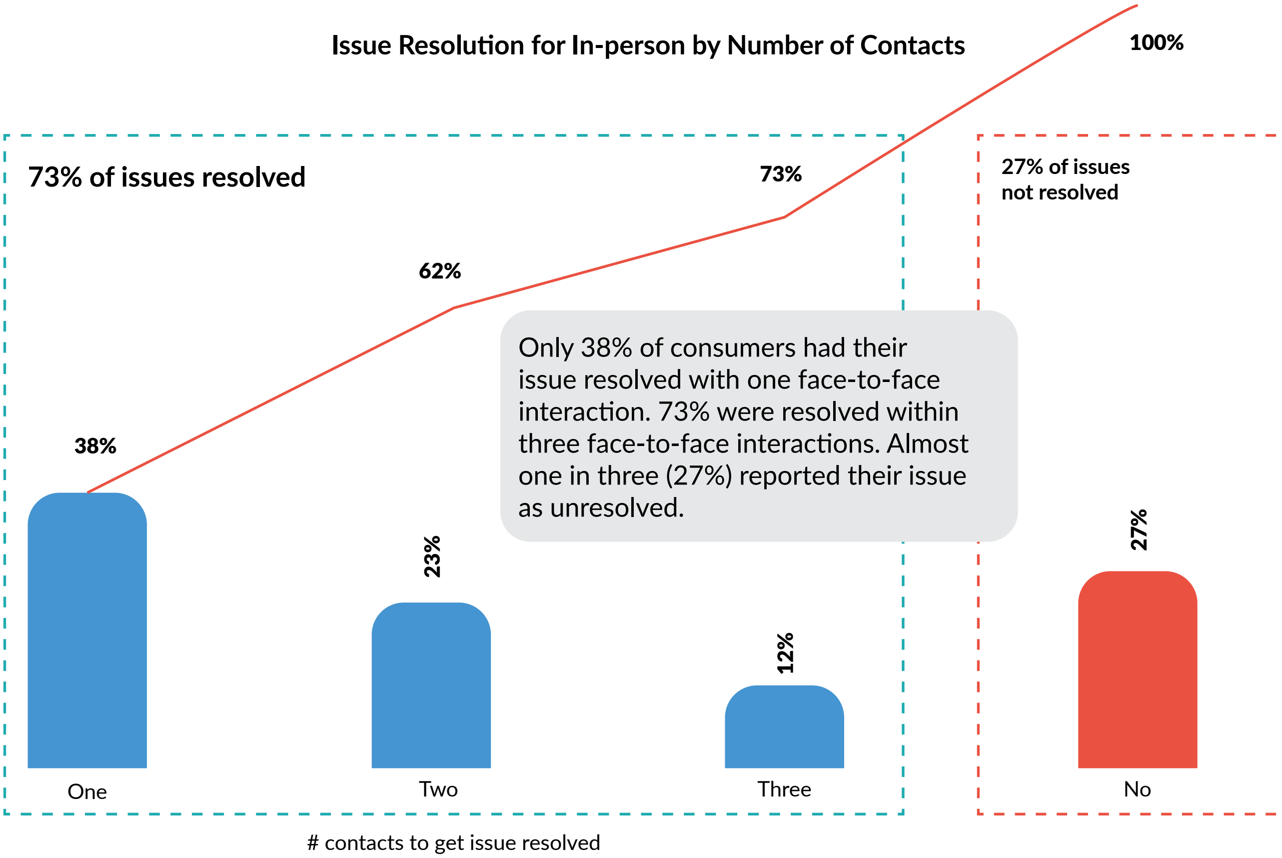
Issue Resolution and Satisfaction



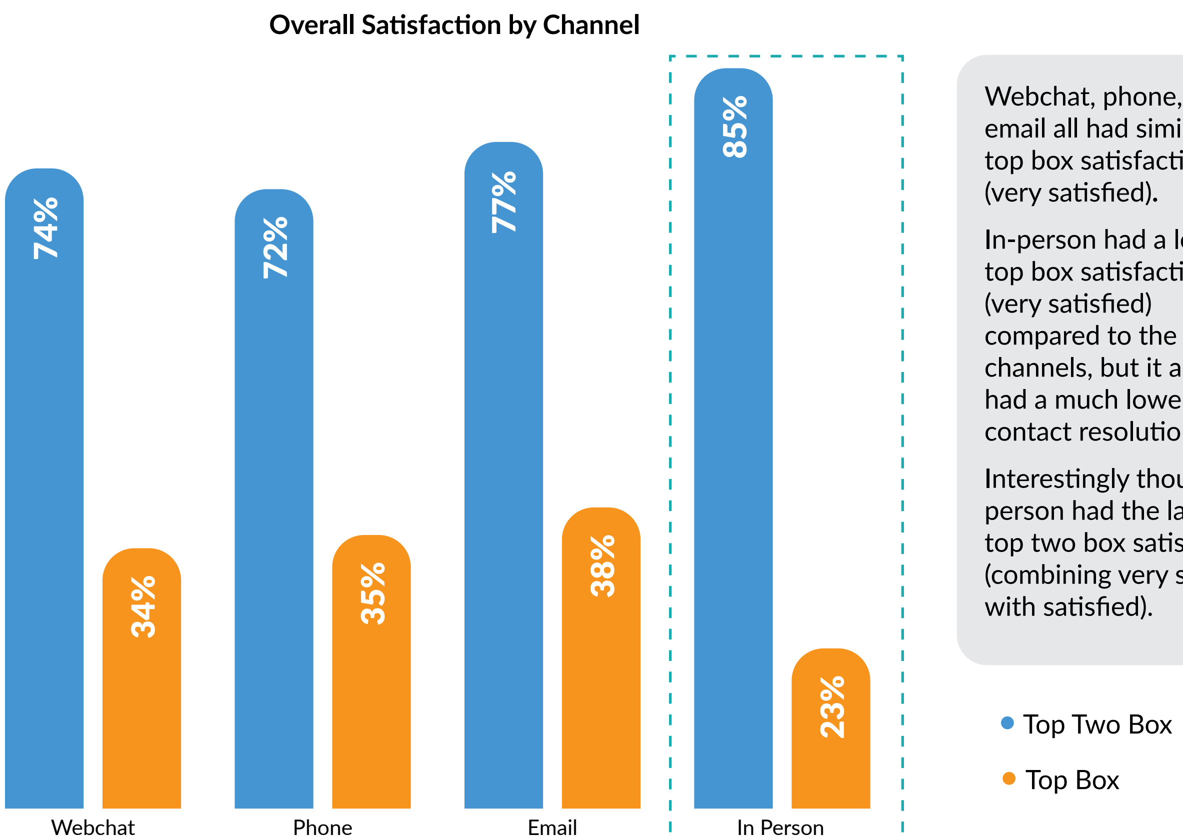


Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Issue Resolution and Satisfaction



Only 38% of consumers had their issue resolved with one face-to-face interaction. 73% were resolved within three face-to-face interactions. Almost one in three (27%) reported their issue as unresolved.

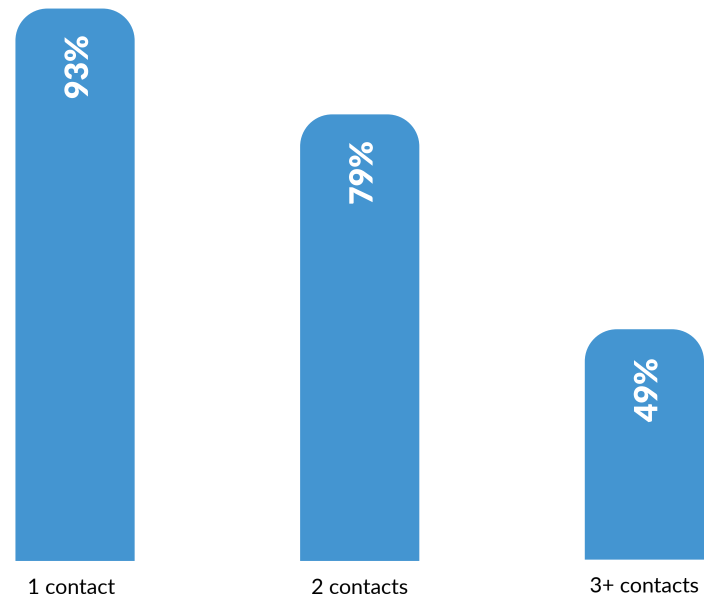


Webchat, phone, and email all had similar top box satisfaction (very satisfied).

In-person had a lower top box satisfaction (very satisfied) compared to the other channels, but it also had a much lower first contact resolution rate.

Interestingly though, in-person had the largest top two box satisfaction (combining very satisfied with satisfied).

Impact of Issue Resolution on Customer Satisfaction



Significant Finding

The more contacts a customer feels they have to make to get their issue resolved, the lower their satisfaction.

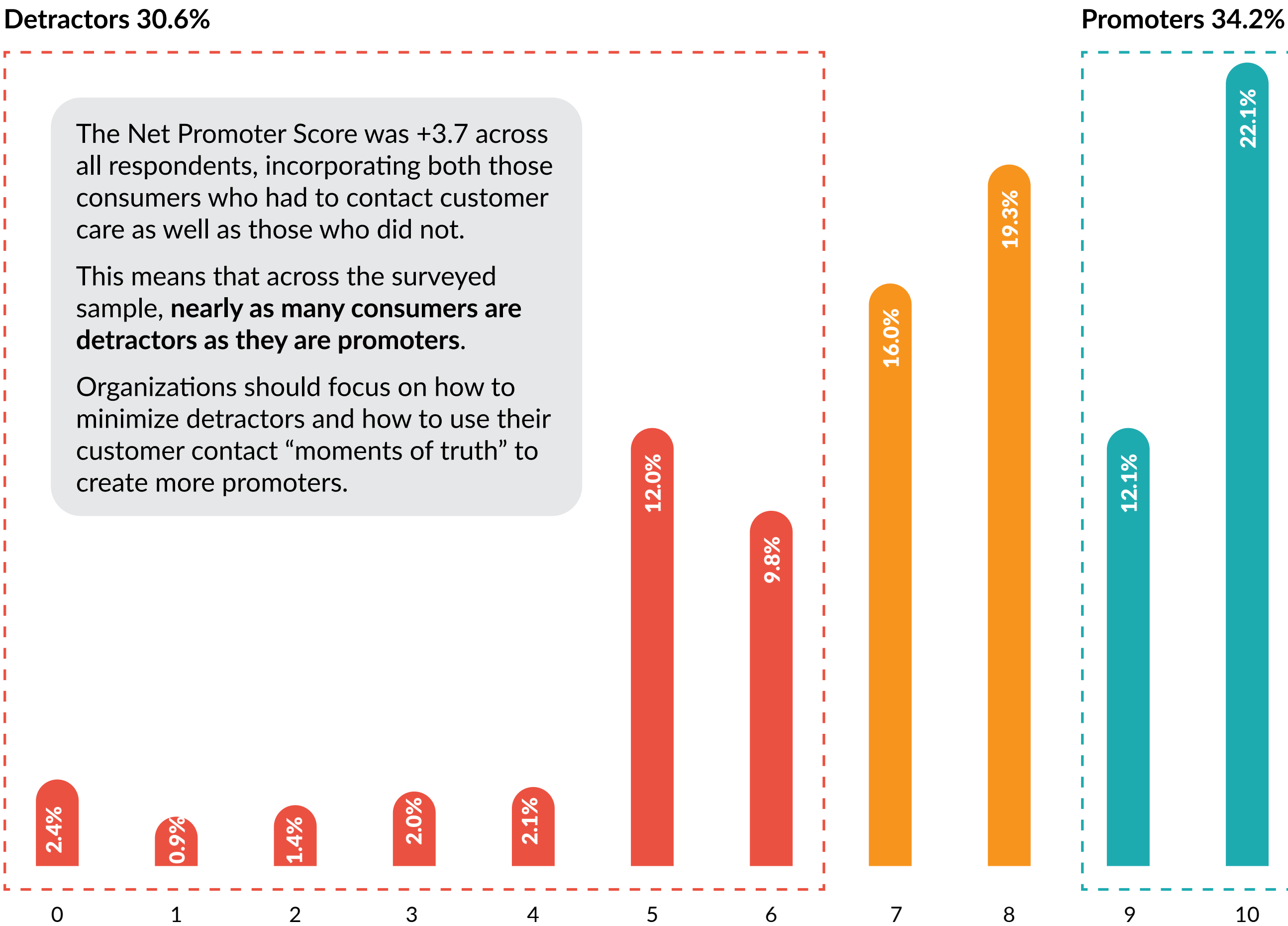
This finding should influence organization's service design strategies.

Brands need to understand that consumers want their issues resolved as quickly as possible, without needing to go through multiple steps in a service journey.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (across all respondents)

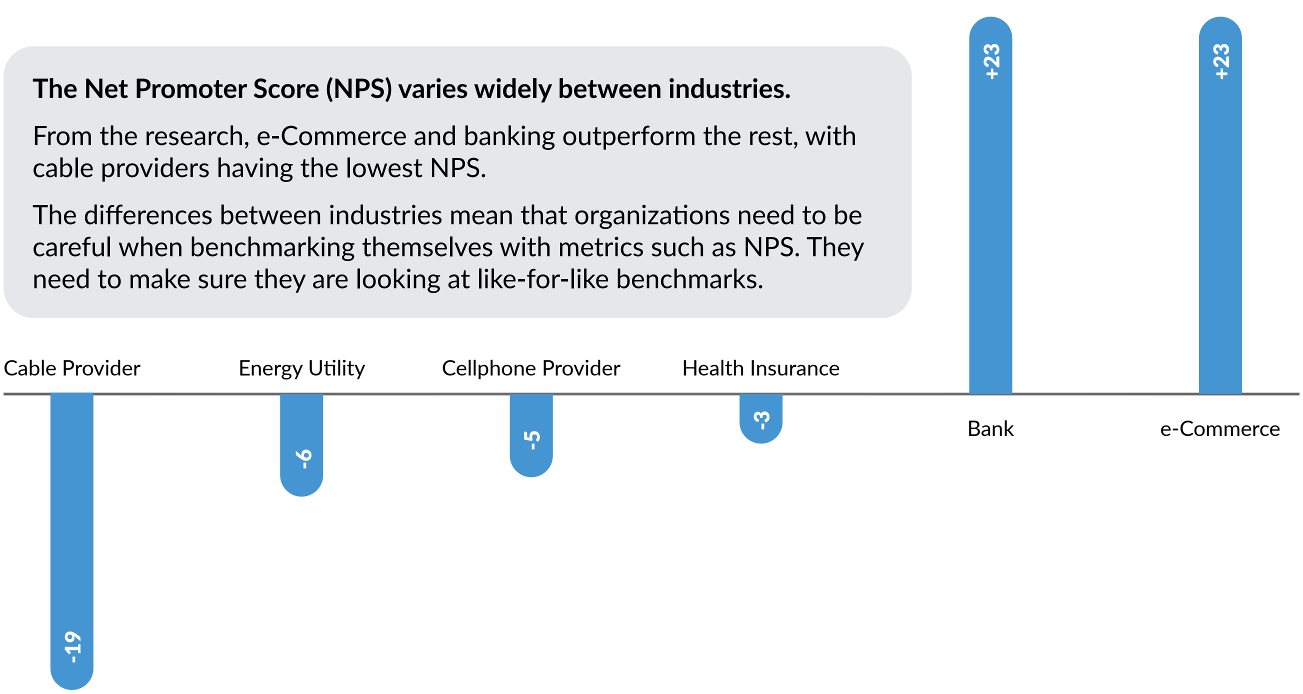


The Net Promoter Score was +3.7 across all respondents, incorporating both those consumers who had to contact customer care as well as those who did not.

This means that across the surveyed sample, **nearly as many consumers are detractors as they are promoters**.

Organizations should focus on how to minimize detractors and how to use their customer contact “moments of truth” to create more promoters.

Net Promoter Score (by industry)



The Net Promoter Score (NPS) varies widely between industries.

From the research, e-Commerce and banking outperform the rest, with cable providers having the lowest NPS.

The differences between industries mean that organizations need to be careful when benchmarking themselves with metrics such as NPS. They need to make sure they are looking at like-for-like benchmarks.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Net Promoter Score

Impact of Customer Contact on Net Promoter Score

Significant Finding

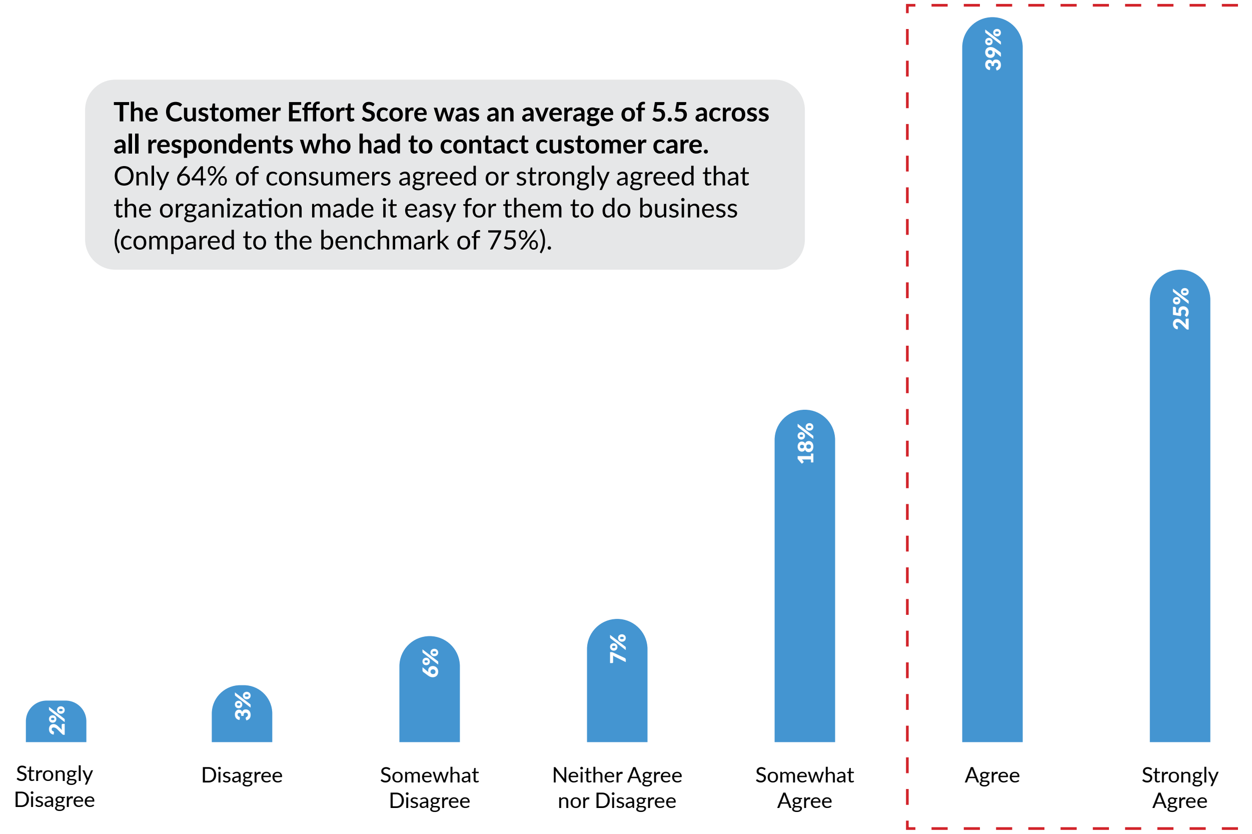
The "resting heart-beat" of satisfaction is impacted by customer care.

Consumers who had no contact with customer care had an NPS of +3. If consumers needed to contact customer care and their issue was resolved on the first contact, NPS increased to +28, but more than one contact brought the NPS down to equal or less than the NPS of consumers who had not contacted customer care.

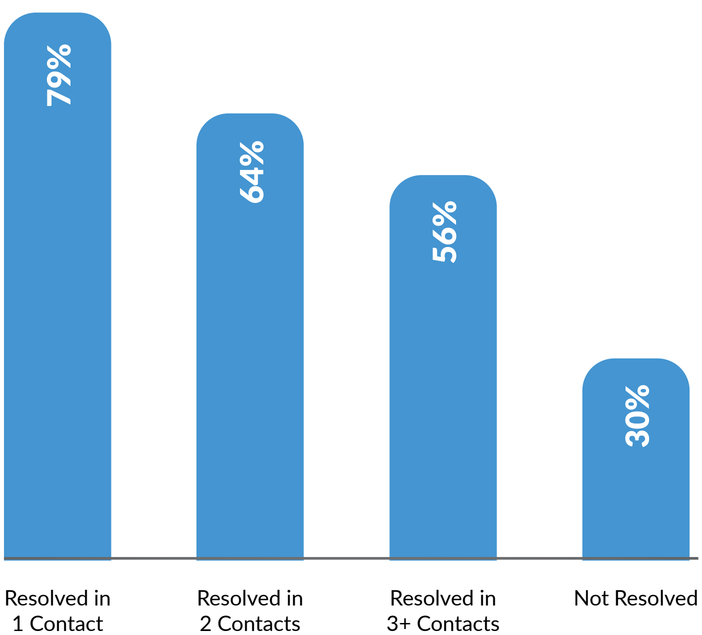
Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Customer Effort

The Customer Effort Score was an average of 5.5 across all respondents who had to contact customer care. Only 64% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed that the organization made it easy for them to do business (compared to the benchmark of 75%).



Impact of Customer Contact on Customer Effort Score



Significant Finding

Customer Effort Score reduces as the number of contacts to resolution increases.

When resolved with one contact, 79% of consumers strongly agree or agree that the business made it easy for them.

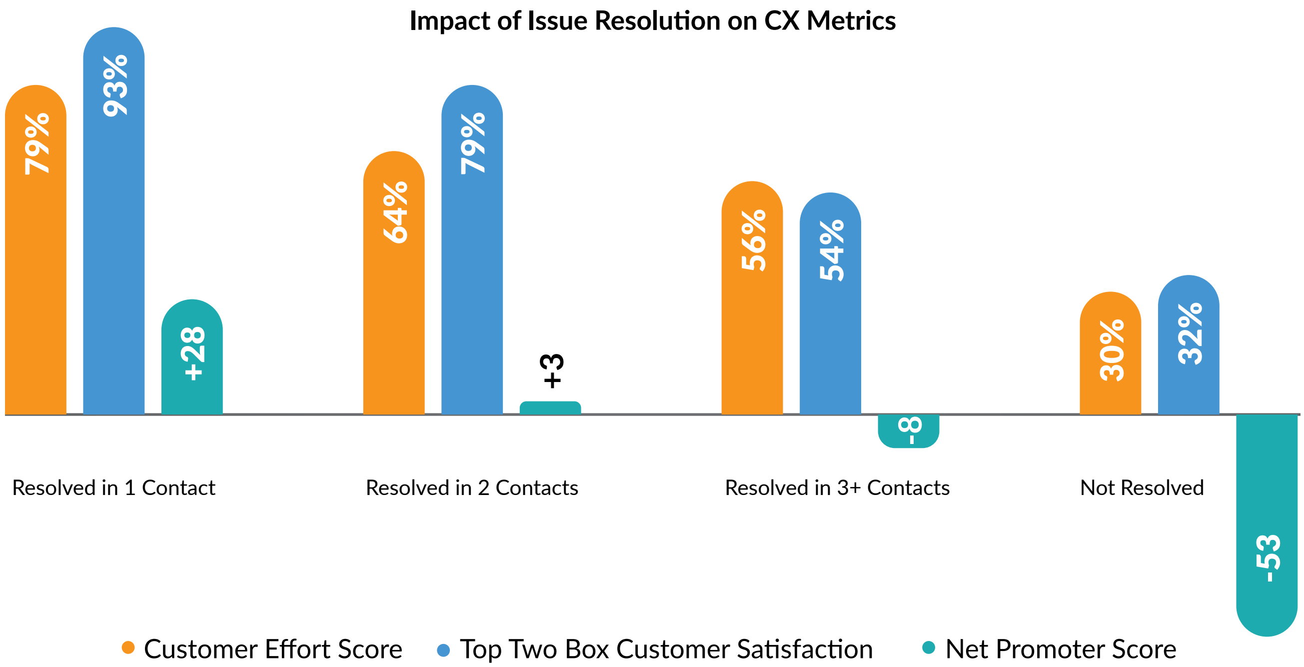
This drops to 56% for consumers who were resolved in three or more contacts.

Customer effort is partly how the brand makes a customer feel about their service journey, and partly about what a customer has to do during their service journey.

This finding clearly indicates that the more a customer has to do (as in making multiple contacts), the more difficult they feel their service journey has been.

Consumer Experiences with Human Assisted Transactions

Customer Effort



Significant Finding

The number of contacts required to resolve issues has an impact on all three of the major CX metrics.

Top Two Box Customer Satisfaction (TTB CSAT), Customer Effort Score (CES) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) all reduce as the number of contacts increase.

Unsurprisingly, the worst results are from the unresolved group who had an NPS score of -53.

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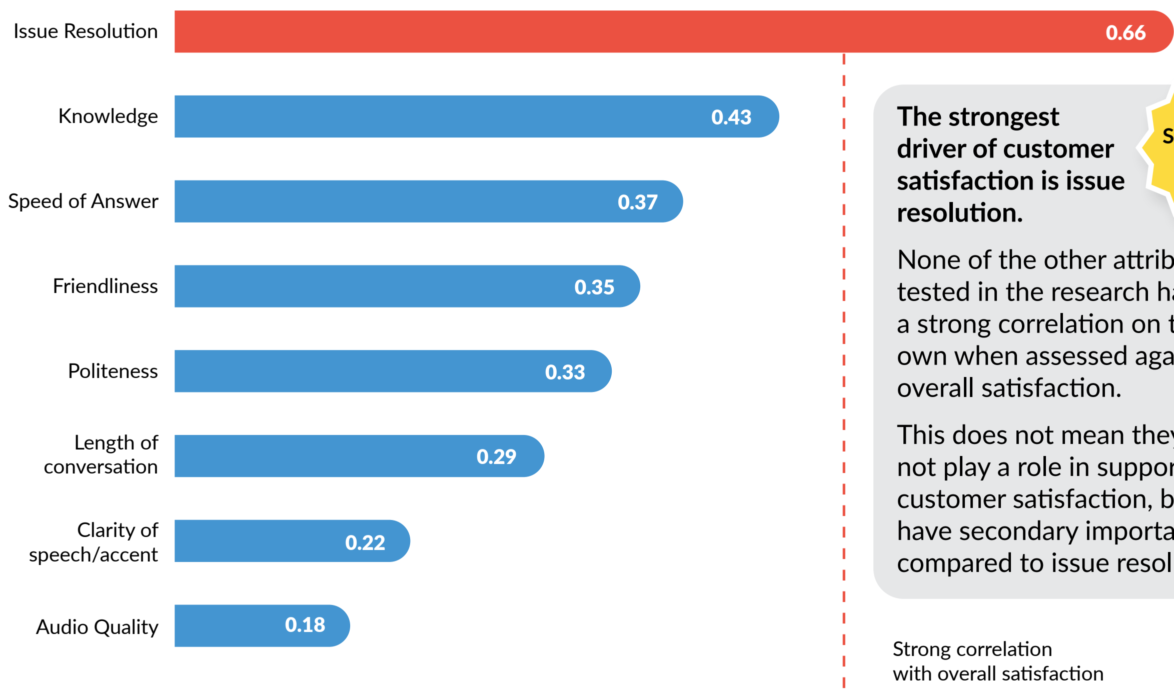
Satisfaction Drivers
Survey Results

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 541 responses across the data points.

Satisfaction Drivers

Correlation Between Attributes and Overall Satisfaction



Significant Finding

The strongest driver of customer satisfaction is issue resolution.

None of the other attributes tested in the research had a strong correlation on their own when assessed against overall satisfaction.

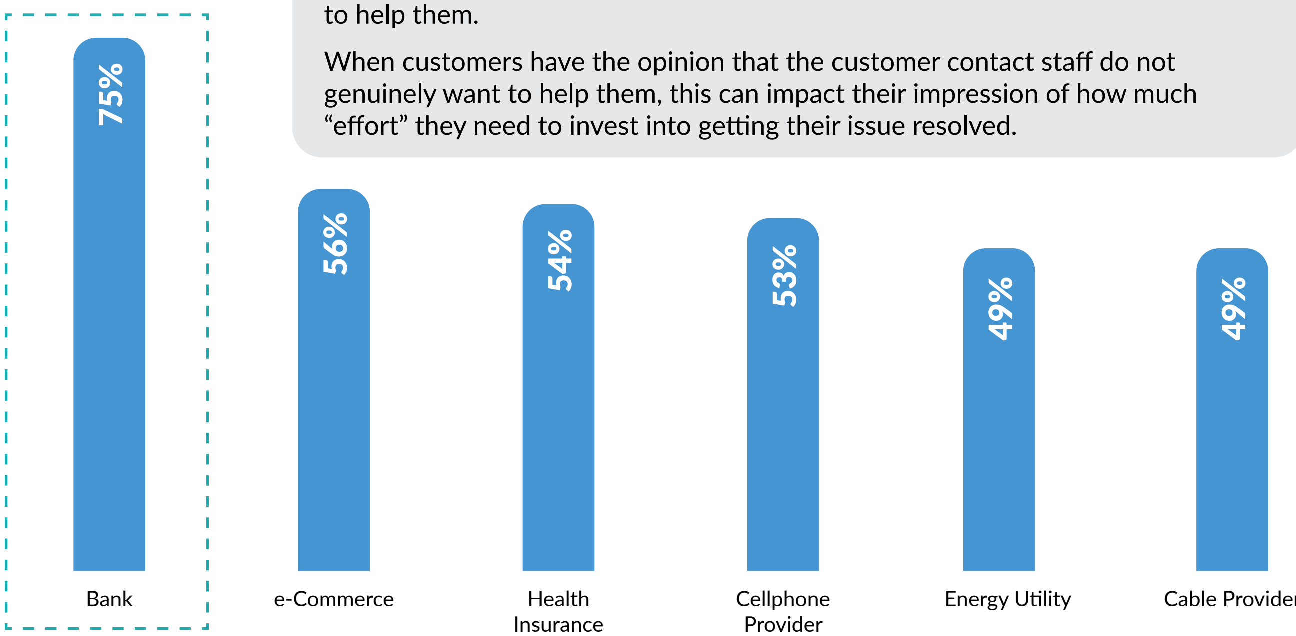
This does not mean they do not play a role in supporting customer satisfaction, but they have secondary importance compared to issue resolution.

When thinking about the business overall, how strongly do you agree that their staff genuinely wnat to help you as a customer when you have questions?

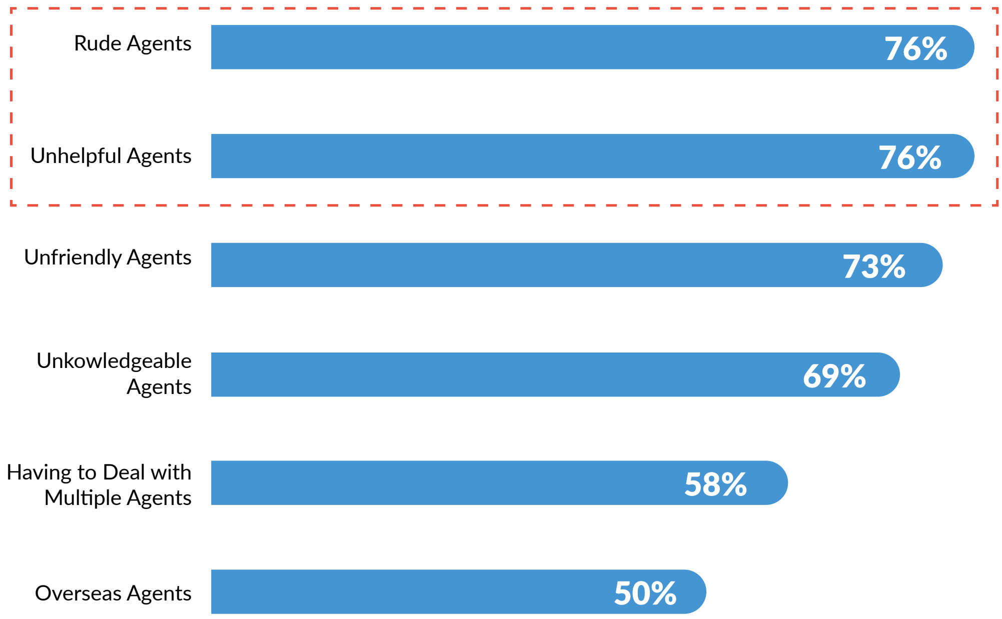
In general, consumers do not have a high opinion that the staff genuinely want to help them when they have questions.

Banking customers, though, do agree more strongly that the staff want to help them.

When customers have the opinion that the customer contact staff do not genuinely want to help them, this can impact their impression of how much "effort" they need to invest into getting their issue resolved.



What do consumers find most frustrating when talking to contact center agents?



Rudeness and unhelpful agents are the two most frustrating items when talking to contact center agents.

Although offshoring can be a political "hot topic," it is interesting that consumers found talking to overseas agents the least frustrating aspect when talking to contact center agents.

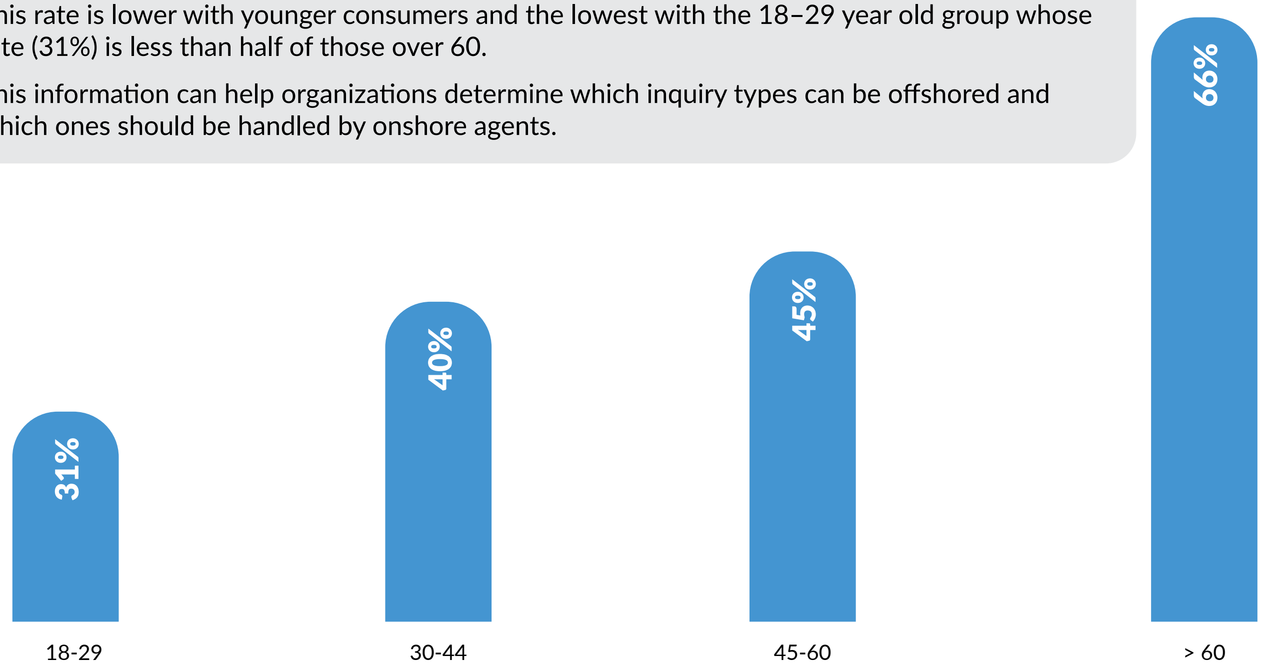
Frustration with Overseas Agents

Younger consumers are more accepting of overseas contact center agents than older consumers.

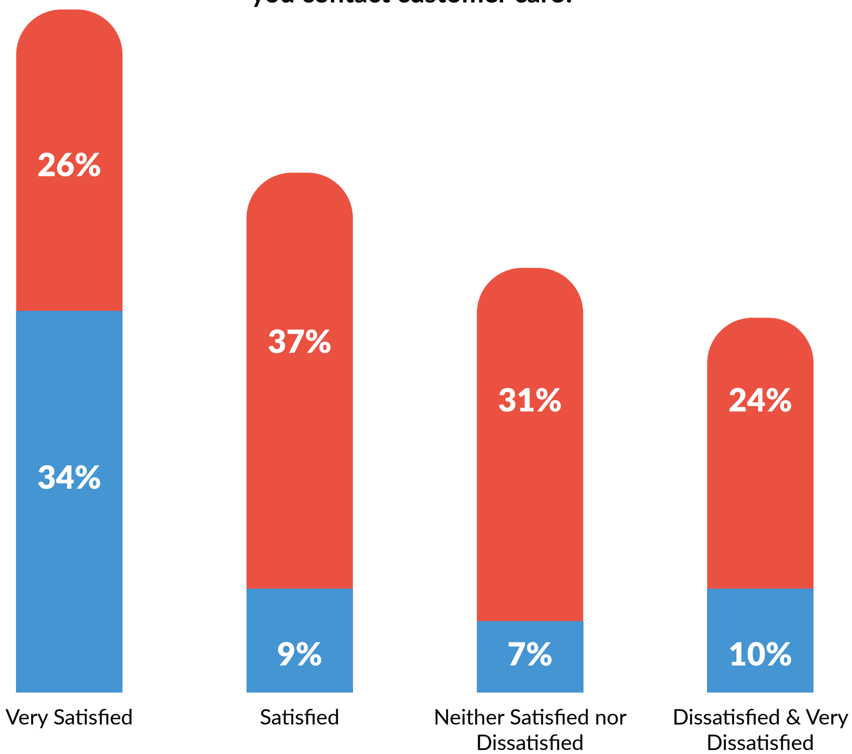
Around two in three (66%) consumers over the age of 60 report frustration with overseas agents.

This rate is lower with younger consumers and the lowest with the 18–29 year old group whose rate (31%) is less than half of those over 60.

This information can help organizations determine which inquiry types can be offshored and which ones should be handled by onshore agents.



How important is it to talk to the same agent everytome you contact customer care?

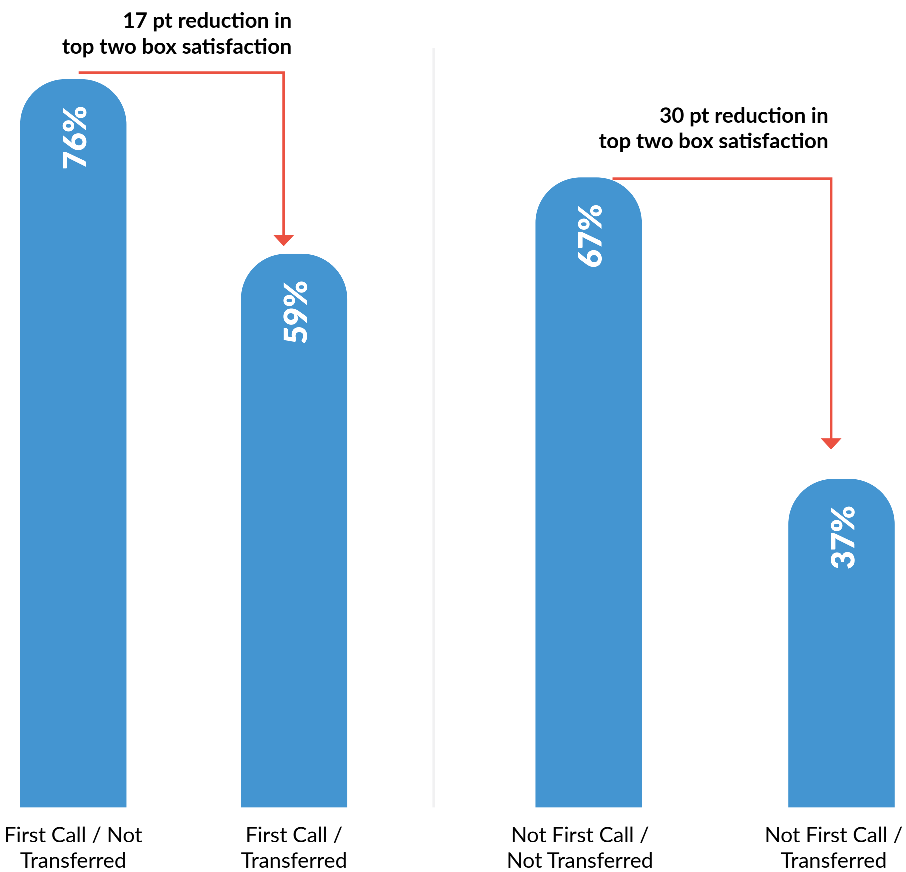


It seems that a slight majority of customers who have had a very good experience previously think it is important to talk to the same person again, but in general this is not something that is deemed to be important for most consumers.

Across all respondents, **only 13% think it is very important and 32% think it is important** to talk to the same person again.

- Very Important
- Important

Impact of Transfers on Satisfaction



While repeat contacts on the same issue clearly have a negative impact on satisfaction, we also tested the impact that being transferred has on top two box satisfaction.

The results indicate that **customers who are transferred have a lower satisfaction rating** than those who are not transferred.

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Survey Results

- Consumer Opinions
- Consumer Reflections

Methodology of the 2020 CXMB Series results: Data was collected from the nearly 3 million people, ages 18-99, who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, between July-September 2020. For this section, the sample size included an average of 227 responses across the data points.

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

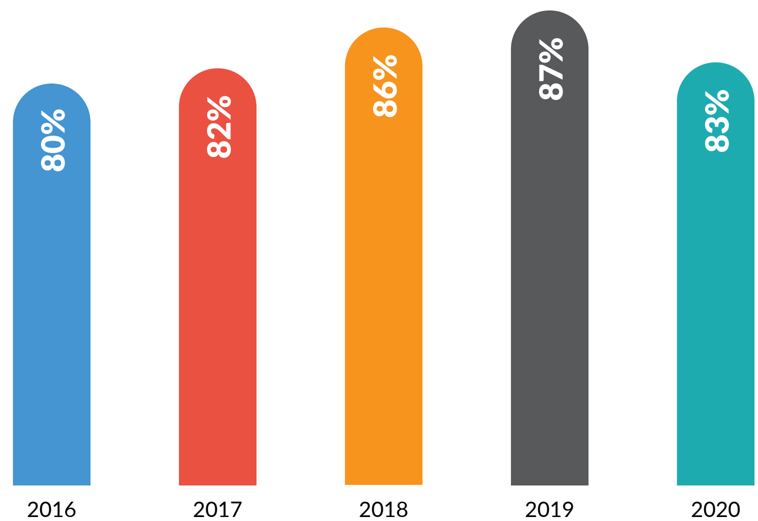
Consumer Opinions

We wanted to understand what consumers said they would do when they had either a positive or a negative experience. Would they share these experiences with friends and family? Would they post about them publicly? We also wanted to understand if they felt these experiences would impact their future purchase decisions and whether they would be willing to pay extra if they could be guaranteed "world class customer service."

Over four in five (83%) consumers are very likely or somewhat likely to share a negative customer care experience with friends, family, and others.

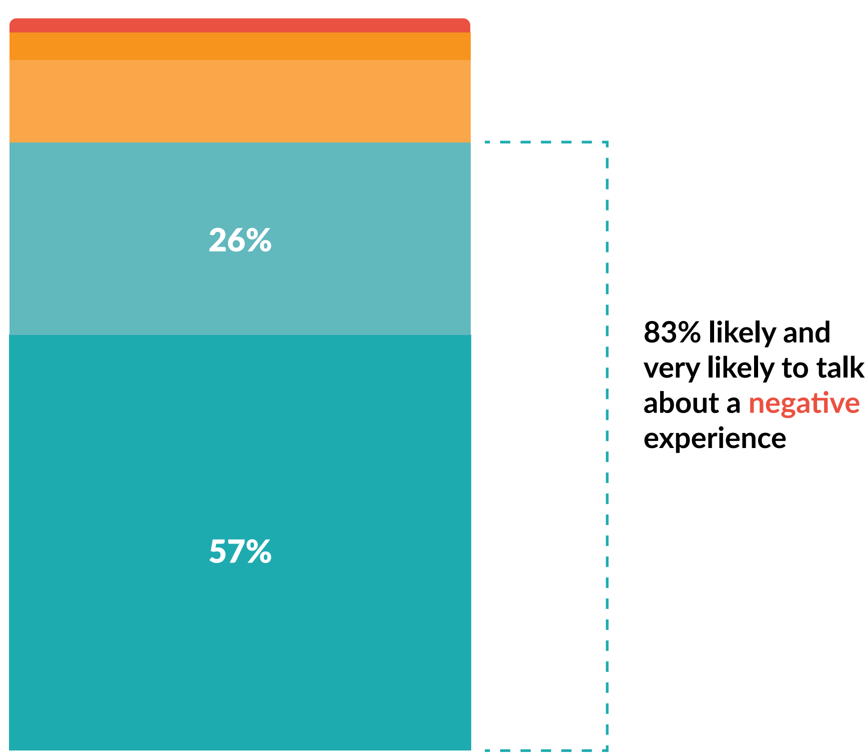
This is consistent with previous years' findings.

How likely are you to share a negative customer care experience? (trended results)



How likely are you to share a negative customer care experience? (2020 results)

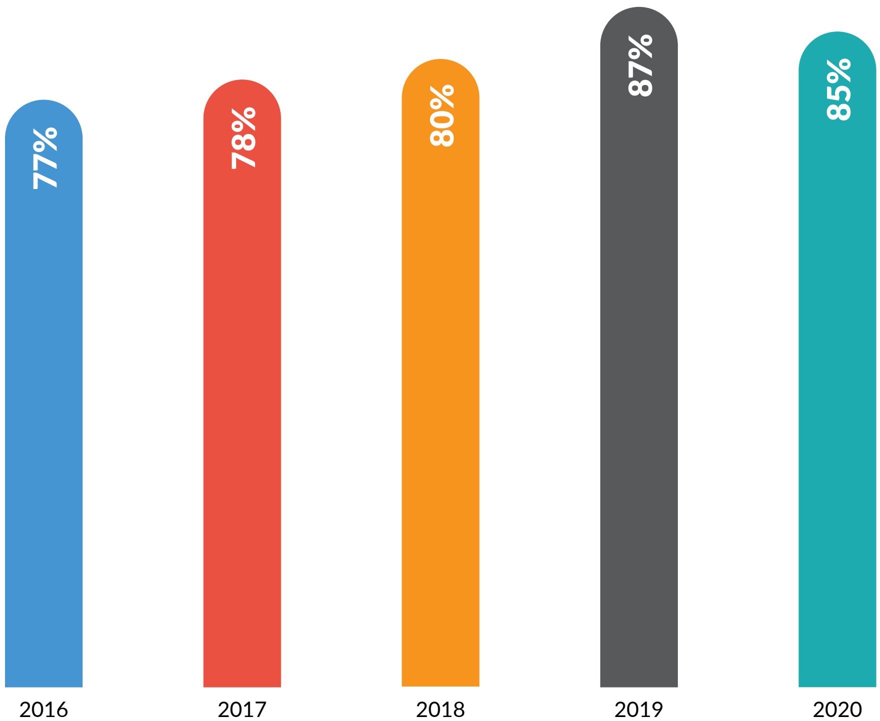
57% of consumers are very likely to talk about negative experiences and 83% are likely or very likely to talk about their negative experience.



Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Opinions

How likely are you to share a positive customer care experience? (trended results)



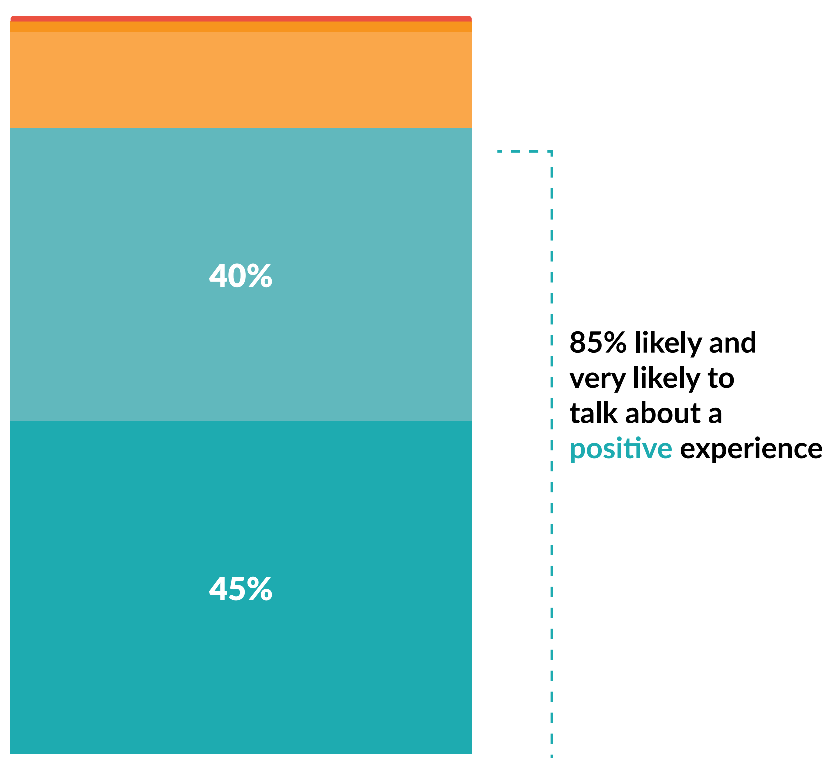
85% of consumers state they are very likely or somewhat likely to share a positive customer care experience with friends, family, and others.

This result is consistent with 2019, but higher than it was in previous years.

How likely are you to share a positive customer care experience? (2020 results)

Only 45% of consumers are very likely to talk about positive experiences.

That means for every 100 poor customer experiences your customers have, you need to have 130 positive customer experiences to “break-even” on customer feedback to friends and family.

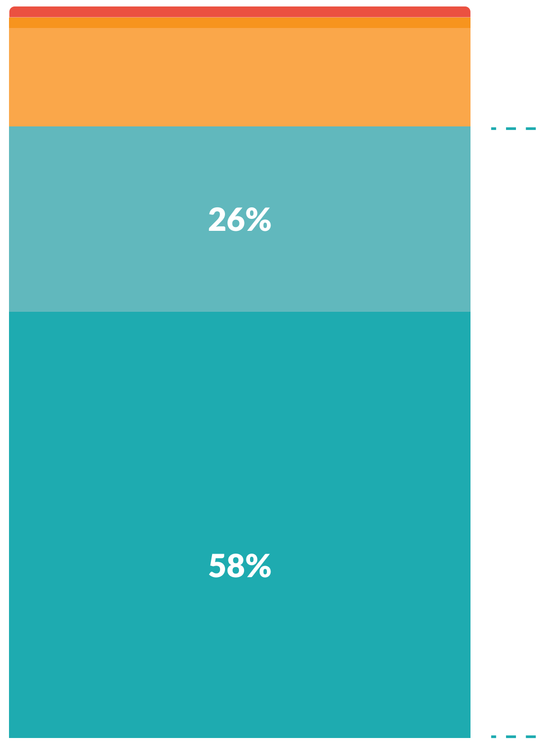


Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Opinions

How likely or unlikely is it that a negative experience with a brand's customer care department would affect your future purchase decisions?

58% of consumers are very likely to change purchase decisions based on negative experiences.

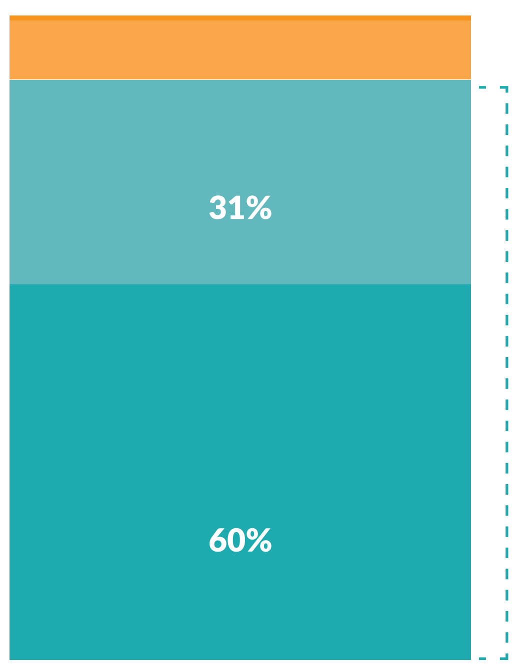


84% likely and very likely to change purchase decisions based on a negative experience

How likely or unlikely is it that a positive experience with a brand's customer care department would affect your future purchase decisions?

60% of consumers are very likely to change purchase decisions based on a positive experience.

This is likely to be higher in industries with low switching costs (e.g. supermarkets or clothing firms) compared to industries with high switching costs.



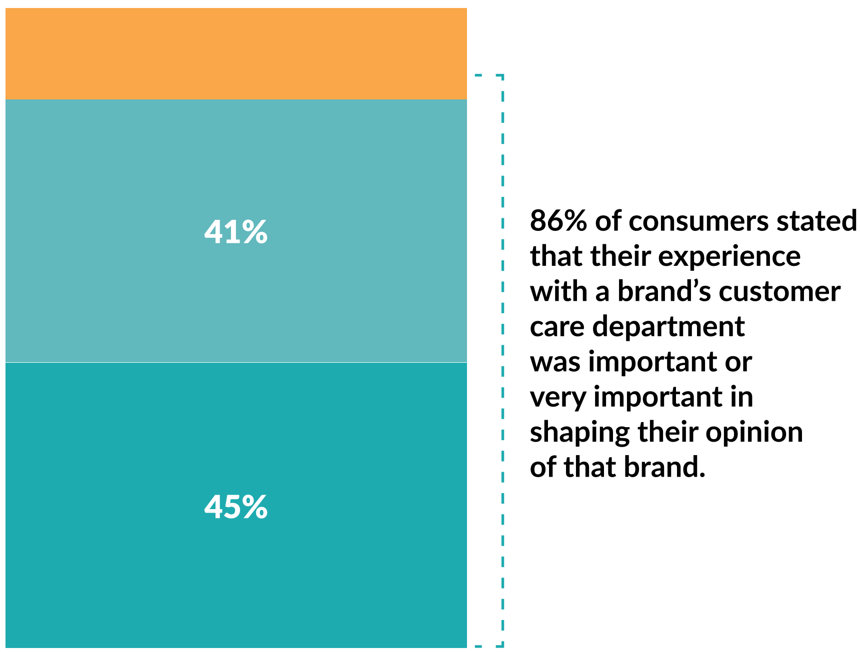
91% likely and very likely to change purchase decisions based on a positive experience

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Opinions

To further understand consumer opinions, we wanted to know if consumers felt their customer care experience was important in shaping their opinion of a brand, and if they would be willing to pay extra for "world class" customer service.

How important is your experience with a brand's customer care department in shaping your opinion of that brand?



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

A higher percentage of customers who have had contact with customer care would be willing to pay more for "world-class" customer service.

This is an interesting illustration of the impact that customer contact can have on consumers' opinions of a brand.

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

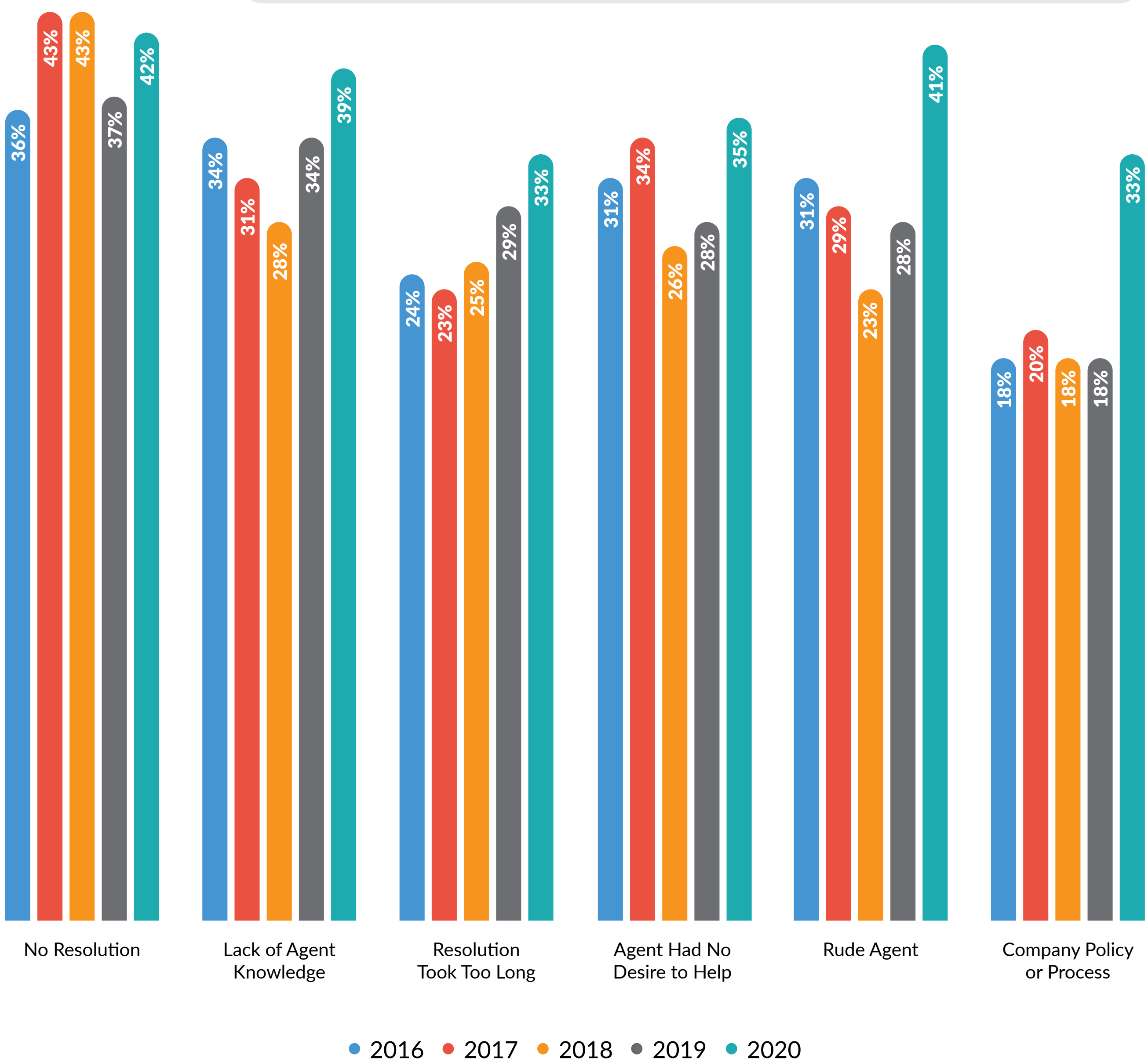
We also surveyed consumers to determine if they recently had an interaction with a brand, and whether it was a positive or negative experience. We then asked them if they had shared their experiences.

60% of the consumers we surveyed had a negative experience with customer care in the past twelve months.

The reasons for consumers' negative experience are quite broad.

What made the experience negative?
(Select all that apply)

No resolution is still the most frequently mentioned reason for a negative experience, but this year's survey indicates a broader range of reasons for negative experiences, including more instances of **rude agents, lack of agent knowledge, and company policies** driving negative experiences.



Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

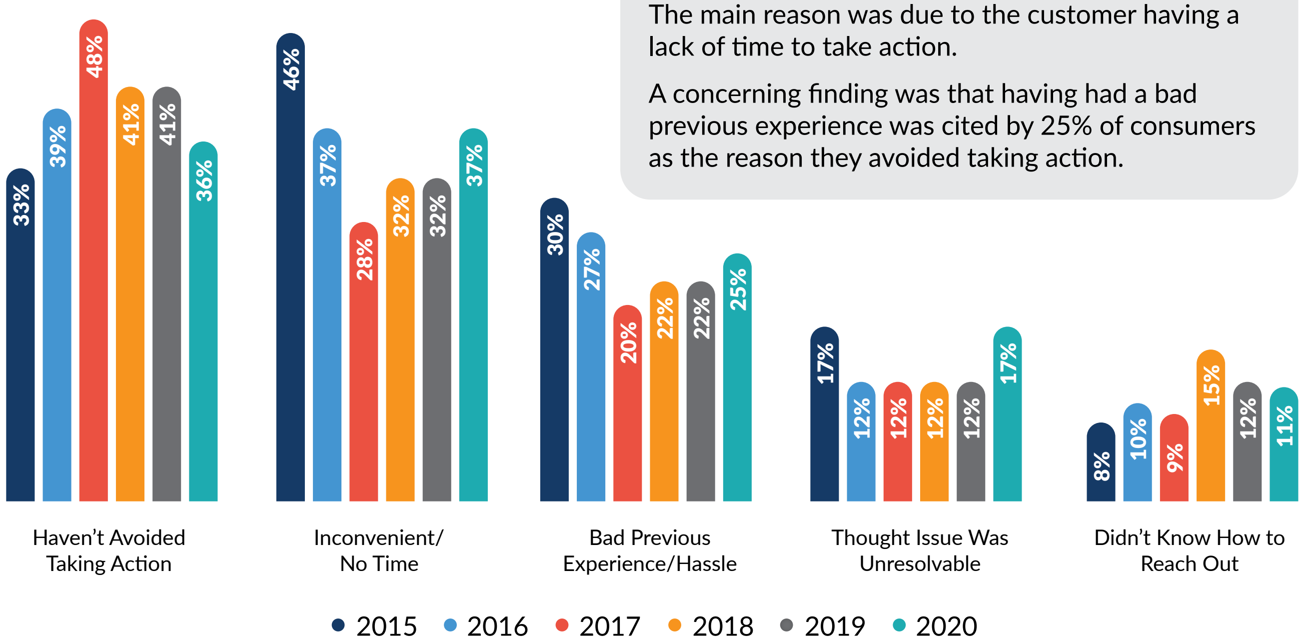
Consumer Reflections

Within the past 12 months, have you avoided taking action on a customer care issue for any of the following reasons? (Select all that apply)

More than 60% of customers reported that they avoided taking action on a customer care issue.

The main reason was due to the customer having a lack of time to take action.

A concerning finding was that having had a bad previous experience was cited by 25% of consumers as the reason they avoided taking action.

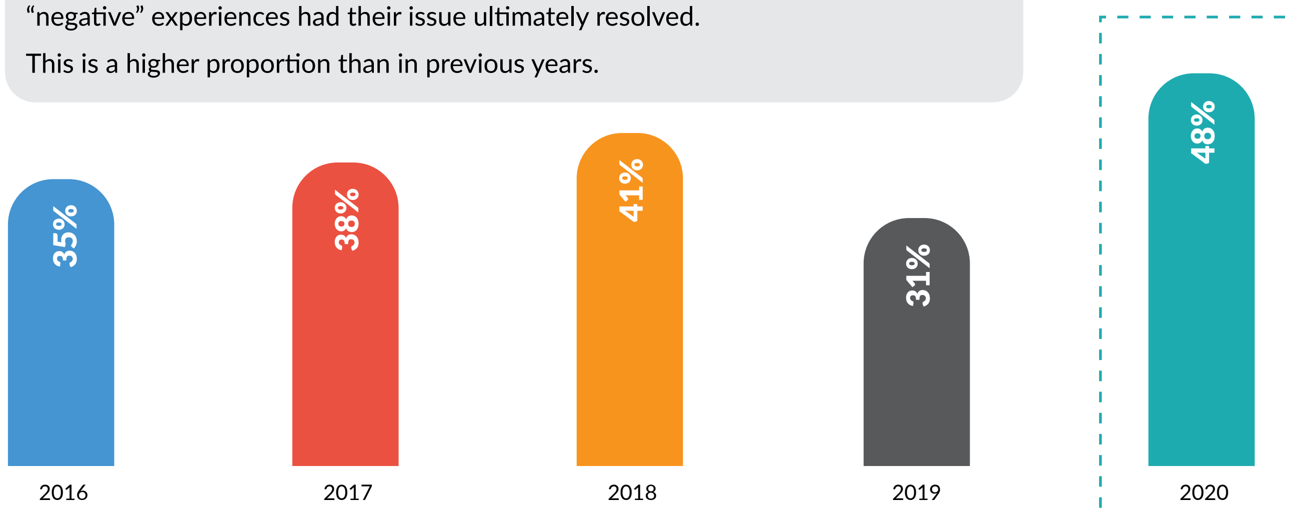


Even though the customer experience was negative, was the issue eventually resolved to your satisfaction?

Customers can have a poor experience and still get their issues ultimately resolved.

This year, the findings show that almost half of the consumers surveyed who had "negative" experiences had their issue ultimately resolved.

This is a higher proportion than in previous years.



Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

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

2020 - Yes: 76%

2019 - Yes: 77%

2018 - Yes: 76%

2017 - Yes: 80%

2016 - Yes: 81%

Significant Finding

Approximately 75-80% of consumers who have a bad experience will tell someone about it, either publicly or privately.

The numbers have not changed over the last few years, but they emphasize the point that brands need to be careful about how a negative experience can damage their reputation, especially with the multiplier effect of social media.

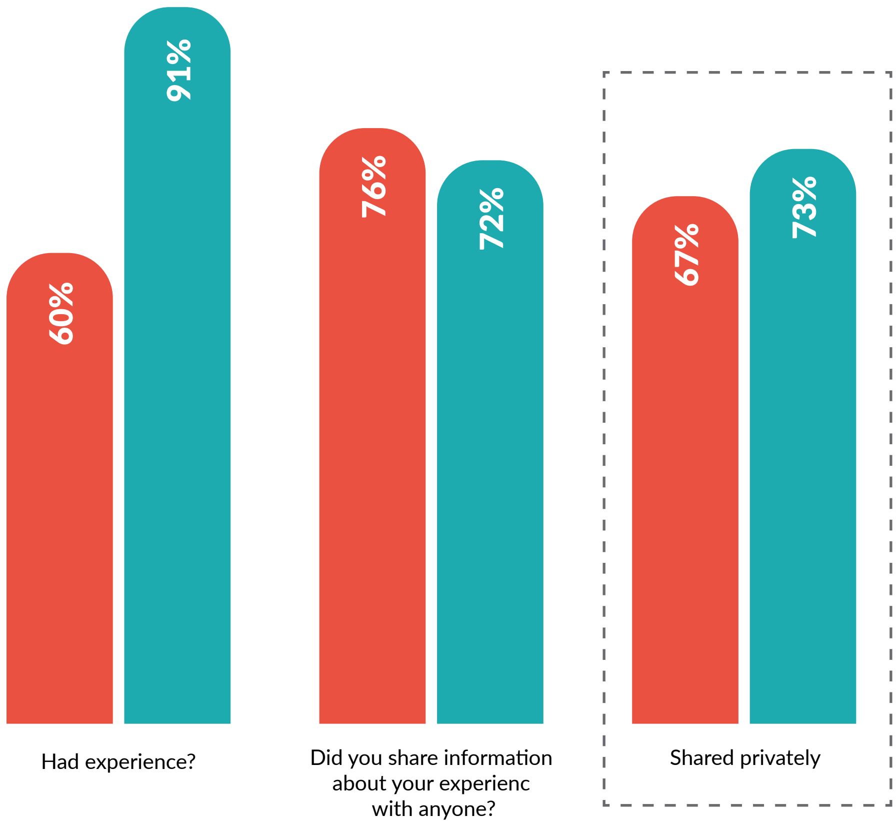
Sharing Positive or Negative Experiences Publicly

Customers who have a bad experience with customer care are slightly more likely to share their experiences (76%) than those customers who have a good experience (72%). When they do share, they are more likely to share their experience publicly via social media (44% vs 39%).

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

Sharing Positive or Negative Experiences Privately

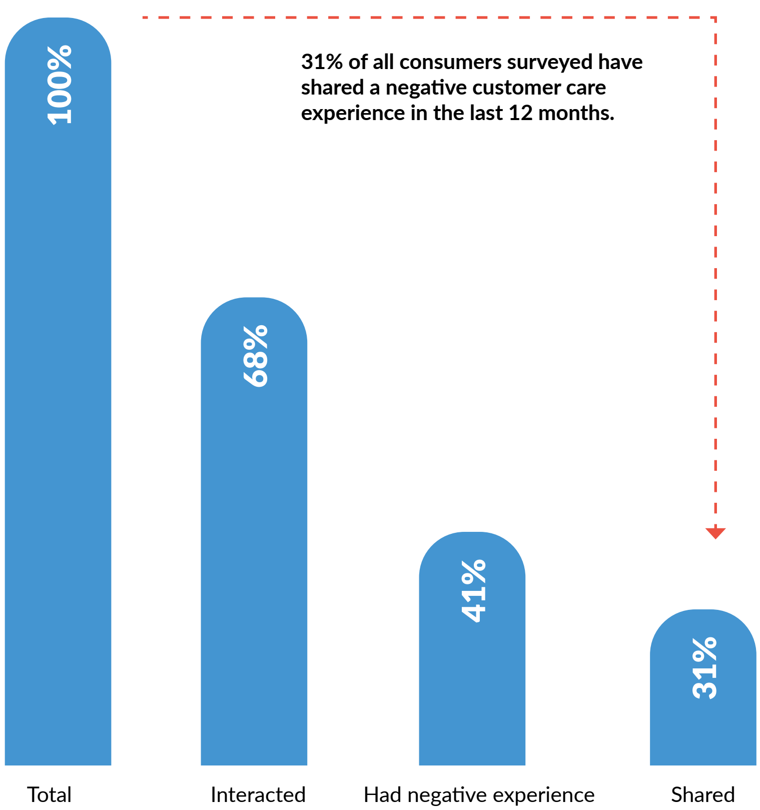


Customers who have a bad experience with customer care are slightly more likely to share their experiences (76%) than those customers who have a good experience (72%).

Of the customers who stated they shared their experiences, we found that customers who had a positive experience were more likely to tell friends and family about it directly in person or on the phone (73% vs 67%).

- Negative Experience
- Positive Experience

Sharing Negative Experiences



68% of consumers had interacted with a brand's customer care department.

41% of total consumers surveyed had a negative experience.

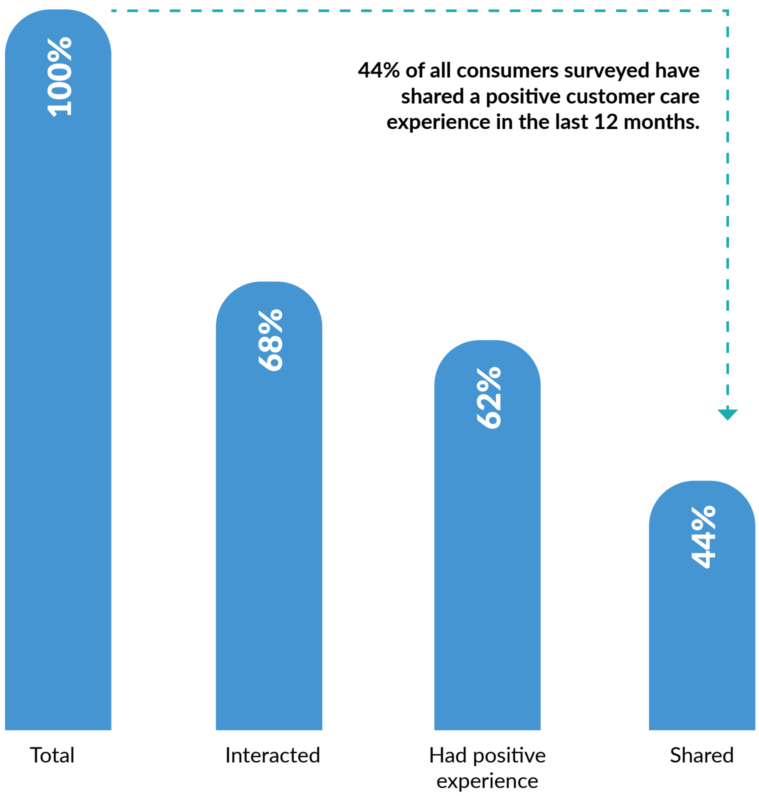
31% of total consumers surveyed had shared a negative experience.

In essence, **76% of all consumers who had a negative experience said they shared it.**

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

Sharing Positive Experiences



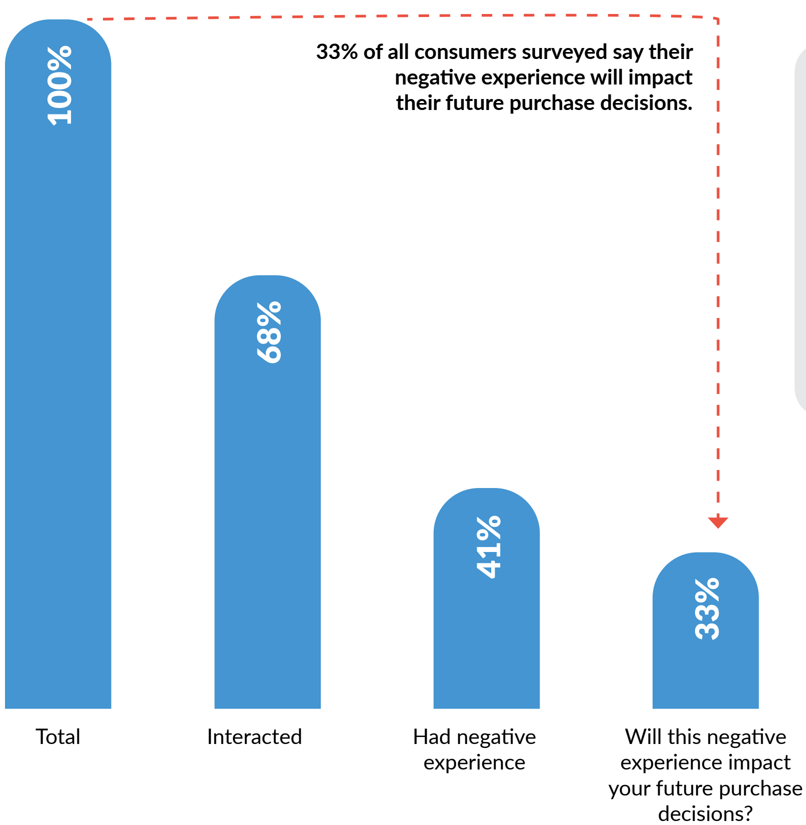
68% of consumers had interacted with a brand's customer care department.

62% of total consumers surveyed had a positive experience.

44% of total consumers surveyed had shared a positive experience.

In essence, **71% of all consumers who had a positive experience said they shared it.**

Negative Experience Impact on Future Purchase Decisions



68% of consumers had interacted with a brand's customer care department.

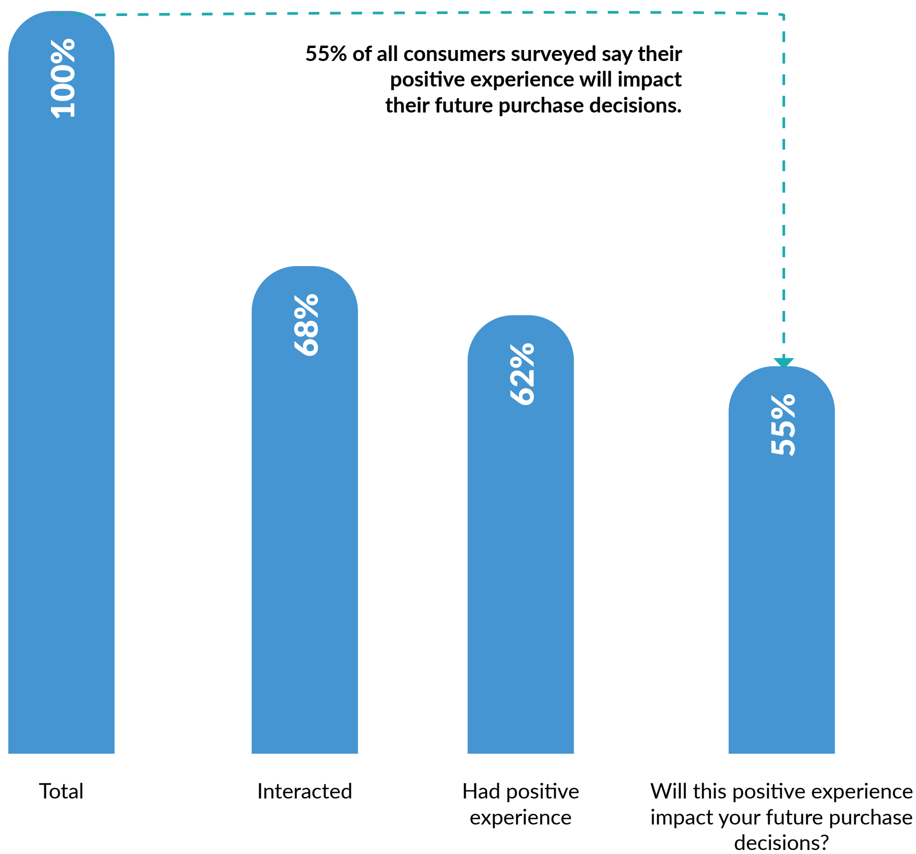
41% of total consumers surveyed had a negative experience.

33% of total consumers surveyed say the negative experience will impact future purchase decisions.

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

Positive Experience Impact on Future Purchase Decisions

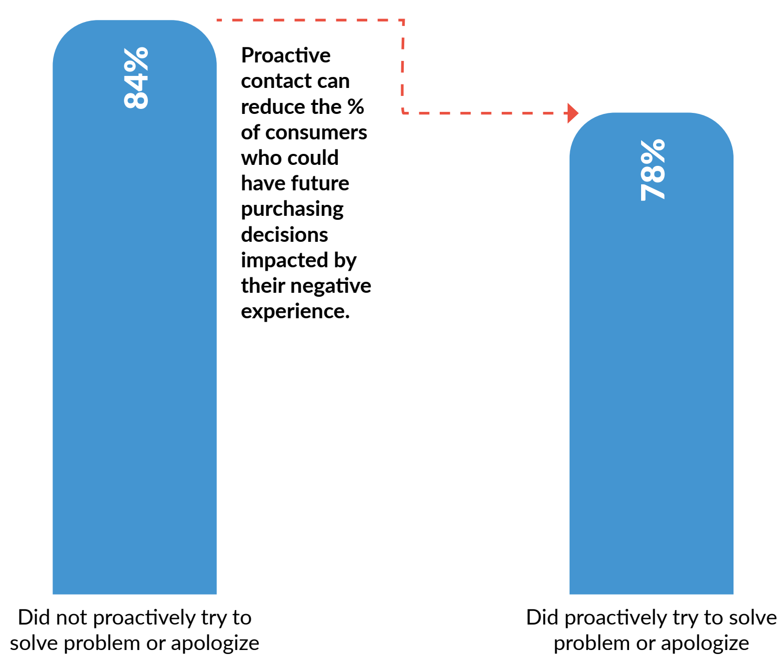


68% of consumers had interacted with a brand's customer care department.

62% of total consumers surveyed had a positive experience.

55% of total consumers surveyed say the positive experience will impact future purchase decisions.

Will this negative experience impact your future purchase decisions?



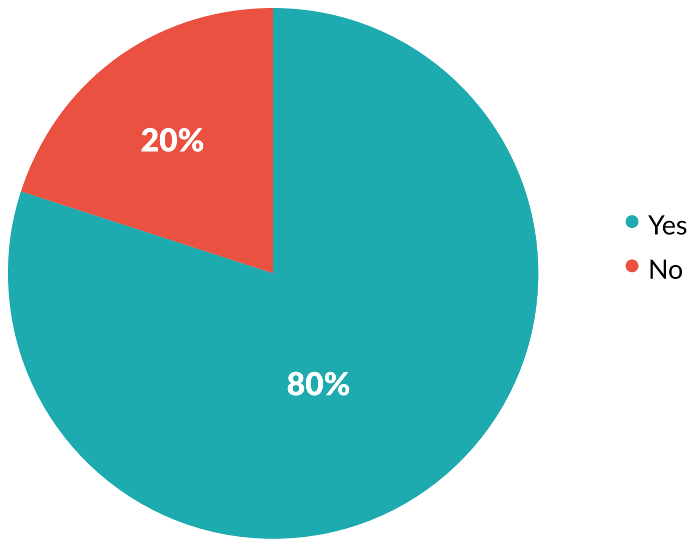
Significant Finding

As a customer retention strategy, proactively contacting a customer after they have had a negative experience (either to attempt to solve the problem or apologize for it) reduces the impact a negative experience may have on future purchasing decisions.

Impact of Customer Contact on Loyalty and Recommendations

Consumer Reflections

Has a brand ever lost your business because you received poor customer care?



Four out of five consumers surveyed (80%) reported that they stopped doing business with an organization due to poor customer care.

This year's results reflect over a 20-point increase in the percentage of respondents stating that a brand had lost their business due to poor customer care. (Previous years were between 57%-59%).

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About the Study's Authors

In 2020, Execs In The Know celebrates 10 years of bringing CX leaders together in the spirit of delivering amazing customer experiences. With a reputation of excellence in the Customer Management Industry, Execs In The Know brings a worldwide community of high-caliber Customer Experience Professionals together to tackle new challenges, challenge the status quo, and position for the future of CX. Execs In The Know offers opportunities to learn, share, network, and engage to innovate - connecting leaders with leaders - through live events (Customer Response Summits and Briefings), the KIA Online Community, the Marketplace, the CX insight Magazine, webinars, blogs, podcasts, Customer Experience Benchmarking Series, whitepapers, Brand Spotlights, and more.

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

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

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Research and Methodology

About the Research

The 2020 Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series has been produced as a part of an ongoing research partnership between Execs In The Know and COPC Inc.

Previous copies of reports, as well as Executive Summaries of select reports, are available on the websites of each respective organization.

You can visit the Execs In The Know website at execsintheknow.com/resources/cxmb-series, or head over to the COPC Inc. website at copc.com/resources/research. At either site, you will find previous editions of the CXMB Series dating back to at least 2015.

Methodology

In total, 5,171 consumers between the ages of 18-99 in the USA participated in this year's research.

The surveys were designed by the COPC Inc. Customer Experience Research Team and the data for this survey was collected using SurveyMonkey Audience between July and September 2020.

Respondents for these surveys were selected from the nearly 3 million people who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day. Respondents for these surveys have been weighted for age, race, sex, education and geography using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to reflect the demographic composition of the United States.

(In previous years, the survey data was collected via the Google Consumer Surveys platform).

Note: Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

Information on how respondents are recruited to SurveyMonkey is available here:
www.surveymonkey.com/mp/audience

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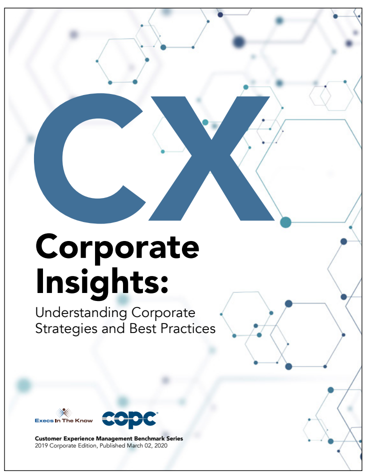

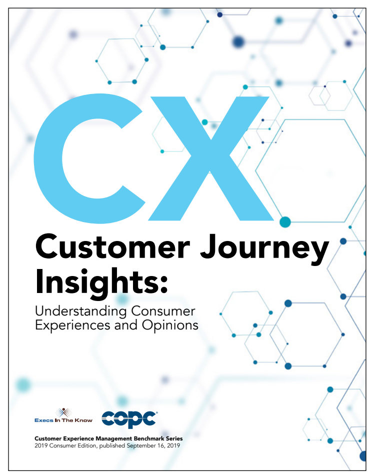

The 2020 CXMB Series Corporate Edition survey will be coming soon.
We look forward to your participation.