



The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

GigCX goes mainstream

Research Paper Published by
Limitless and Execs In The Know

Limitless

Execs In The Know

A View from Execs In The Know:

Why We Believe in a Bright Future for GigCX

Execs In The Know is a global community of senior customer experience (CX) leaders.

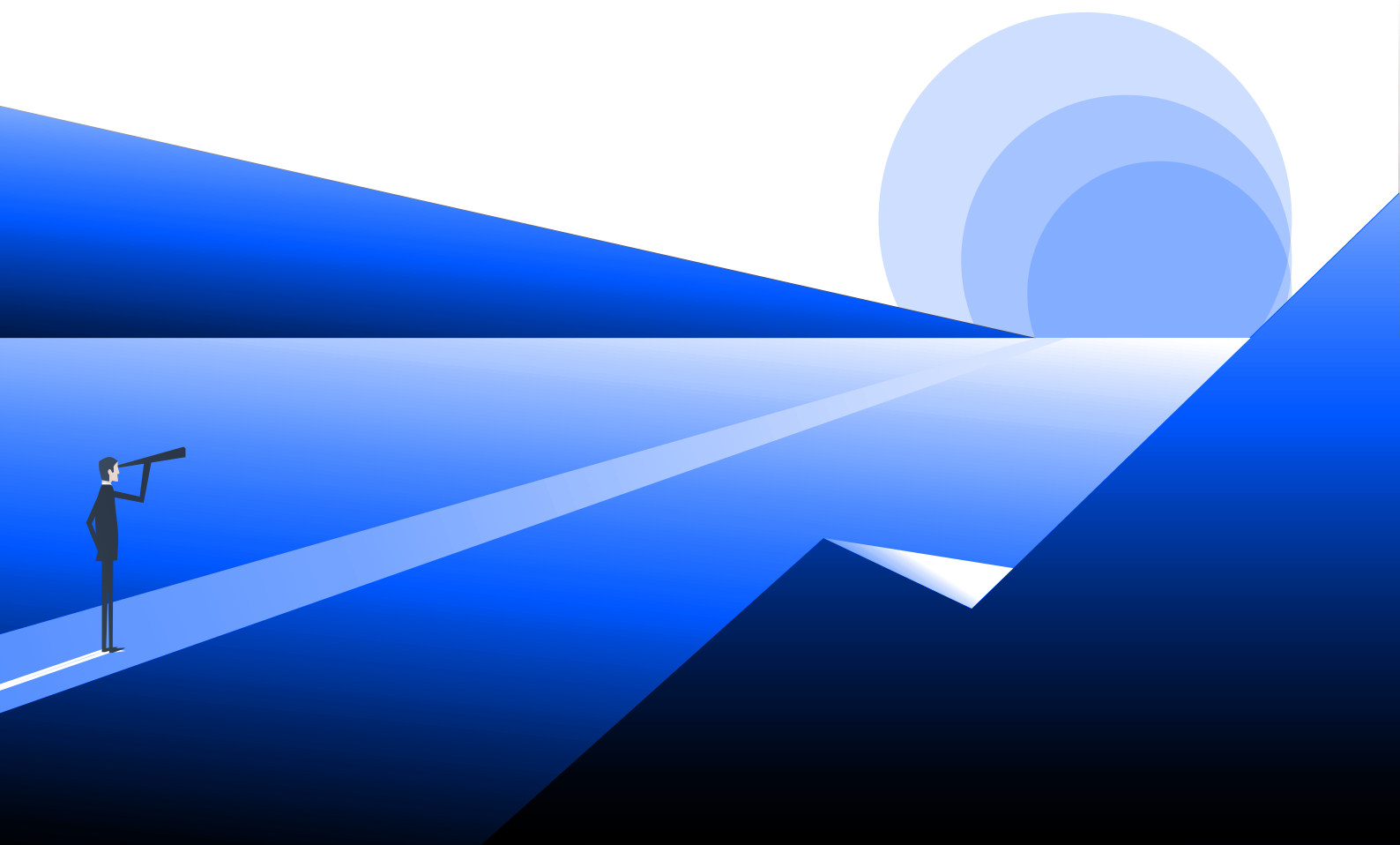
When Limitless first introduced us to the idea of a customer experience (CX) focused, gig-centric report, we couldn't help but be excited to get involved. Our community has been captivated by the idea of gig for some time, and the events of 2020 have only served to fuel greater interest in GigCX solutioning.

While recent events have no doubt acted as a catalyst for greater adoption of GigCX, we've long believed there is a very bright future for gig workers within the CX industry, and for good reason. Presently, many brands are challenged with finding the right mix of talent to handle an influx of unanticipated (and sometimes monumental) growth. The sudden pivot to work from home (WFH) in the early days of the pandemic has proven the effectiveness of a remote-based workforce and, for many organizations, the addition of GigCX Experts is the next logical step in creating a flexible, diverse, and resilient global CX team.

Another incredibly attractive aspect of the gig workers is their passion for the brands they serve. Time and again, we've heard members of our community say brand passion (and even fandom) isn't something that can be trained or coached. It comes from experiencing a brand as a customer, and incredibly loyal customers is often what brands discover when they bring GigCX talent onboard.

Finally, from the worker's perspective, gig is what works for many right now. Not only do individuals get to help build a brand they are passionate about (as mentioned above), but they also get more control over their work/life balance. In fact, it's not uncommon for a GigCX Expert to support themselves with a career in an entirely different industry, with their gig activities having more to do with obsession than occupation.

Whether yours is an organization already full bore with GigCX or just kicking the tires, it's easy to see the immense potential in tackling today's toughest CX staffing challenges, as well as those of tomorrow. We continue to believe in the current and future potential of GigCX, and we're thrilled to have the opportunity to share our enthusiasm through our involvement in this unique report.



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Methodology

Limitless and Execs In The Know (EITK) conducted a survey to look at the current state and views on gig-based customer service (GigCX) in the global CX industry. The study, conducted in January 2021, surveyed 630 current GigCX Experts across thirty four countries in six continents, including the UK, US, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Indonesia, India, South Africa, France and Germany. This included people from a range of different backgrounds and cultures. In addition to this, the report interviewed 15 CX leaders across several industries including Tech, Fitness, and Marketplaces.



CX Leader Contributors

Mark Hillary

**CX Analyst And Host Of The
CX Files Podcast**



Mark is a former technology director turned communication adviser writing about the future of technology and CX.

Chad McDaniel

**Execs In The Know
Co-Founder and President**



Chad McDaniel, President of Execs In The Know, is a well-known advocate for customer experience best practices. He works tirelessly to showcase the success of today's CX Executive.



Mike Flannagan

**Vice President
Microsoft**



Mike is a technology sector executive with a passion for customer success and creating brilliant services and customer experiences.



Dennis Pollett

**Microsoft
Sr. Product Manager**



Dennis is a community support strategy leader at Microsoft, having driven the gig and community models for several years.



Merijn te Booij

**Genesys
EVP & GM of Genesys Employee
Engagement Solutions**



Merijn is a leader of all things related to workforce engagement, building and delivering innovative solutions to help drive experience as a service.



Jackie Craver

**Zwift
Vice President, Community Support**



Jackie leads a team of exceptional member support professionals aligned to deliver on the Zwift mission of: "More People, More Active, More Often".



Richard Small

**Deloitte
Partner**



Richard is the European Lead for Contact Center Transformation at Deloitte, focusing on digital and analytics-enabled change in the retail, consumer, and manufacturing sectors.



Sue Morris

**GitHub
Vice President, Customer Success**



Sue is an advisory board member at Execs In The Know and is driving GitHub's mission to build service as a key differentiator.



Scott Murray

Collective Health
Chief Operating Officer (COO)



Scott is a specialist in global customer operations including digital customer experience, general management, and transformational change.



Mike Havard

Group Director
Davies Group



Mike is a customer management, channels and technology industry leader having founded Ember Group (now Davies Group).



Nick Clark

Boston Consulting Group
Partner



Nick helps leading brands to transform their customer service offering, bringing deep experience in operations, customer loyalty, and digital transformation.



Anand Santhanam

Infosys
Vice President, Head of Strategy
for CMT segment



Anand's experience lies in formulating business solutions using technology and the why, how-to and, when as a means to achieving higher value in business.



Jon Cummins

Sage
VP Services and Customer Success



Jon mobilizes complex Customer Service organizations to deliver transformational performance and exceptional customer experience.



Leigh Hopwood

CCMA
CEO



As CEO for the Call Centre Management Association (CCMA), Leigh looks gives contact center professionals opportunities to network and learn.

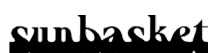


Brett Frazer

Sunbasket
Vice President of Customer Service



Brett has spent the past 20 years helping multi-national organizations and start-ups deliver against a customer promise of the best basics.



Foreword

Mark Hillary CX Analyst And Host Of The CX Files Podcast

For all the bad that it's done, the pandemic has actually created a wave of digital transformation and companies have been forced to explore innovative new ways they may not have done otherwise.

GigCX, or as some people like to refer to it, 'crowdsourced gig customer service,' has really turned the model on its head. It's a completely different kind of distributed support network, and a far cry from a replication of the contact center.

You could be forgiven for not being familiar with the term. GigCX is a model that 'crowdsources' customer support by enabling organizations to route their customer enquiries securely through a GigCX platform that distributes them to knowledgeable and passionate gig-based Experts who are users of the products themselves, and who can answer those questions for brands they love.

It's completely changed how companies resource people for customer service. If you go back a decade or more, it was entirely different. If you were offshoring, it was about getting people that could communicate, and have knowledge of what the customers were using. In this sense, it was entirely around basic communication skills. Nobody was hiring for specific knowledge of the products being supported, particularly with more technical products that are updated continuously.

In GigCX, we're not just replicating their contact center, by having a distributed network of Experts. We're actually building a network of brand advocates and people who are not only interested in the companies they're supporting, but quite often they actively love these companies. They aren't just watching the clock and waiting for their shift to end - they are making a proactive choice to log in and help customers when they want to.

It's also lengthening the customer journey. It's creating the possibility to talk to people and engage with them before they've bought a product - when they're thinking about something and when they're looking for information, or when they need direct help, or even post purchase.

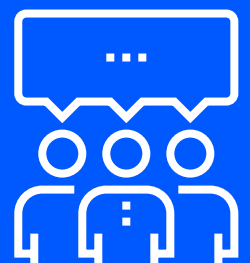
The value, evolution, and acceleration driving GigCX is apparent throughout this report, which is the second annual Gig Customer Service report. Building on the success of the 2020 report and research, Limitless once again reached out to their universe of GigCX freelance Experts in 34 countries, covering 6 continents. They've also interviewed 15 global customer experience leaders in order to understand how far GigCX has come, the unique value it is bringing to organizations, and what frontiers it has yet to conquer.

What was fascinating were the descriptors the leaders and Experts used in describing GigCX and the evolving human connection we're seeing today. 'Enjoyability', 'Enthusiasm', and 'Grace' were words heard throughout the conversations with CX leaders who'd deployed or been involved in some way with GigCX.

Throughout this year's report, you'll see this human connection alive and thriving. I am sure you will enjoy, as I have, the accounts of those who have participated throughout. I hope you will also find interesting the evidence of the vast and untapped potential that lies ahead for companies on the GigCX journey.



Mark Hillary
CX Analyst And Host Of The CX Files
Podcast



Building on the success of the 2020 report and research, Limitless once again reached out to their universe of GigCX freelance Experts in 34 countries, covering 6 continents.



Executive Summary

The Power Of Human Connection



By Megan Neale and Roger Beadle,
Co-founders, Limitless

In the year that has passed since we released the 2020 GigCX Report we called 'The Explosive Rise of GigCX,' it's safe to say that brands have a bigger opportunity than ever before to transform both customer service and the customer experience. In the technology adoption lifecycle popularized in the book 'Crossing the Chasm,' even Geoffrey A. Moore would have to agree that GigCX has long since stopped being the domain of just innovators and early adopters, with the early majority arriving faster than anyone imagined.

It's here to stay, and GigCX is scaling fast, in both volume and scope. Over the past year, Gartner has estimated that by 2023, the gig worker model will account for 35% of the customer service workforce. PWC predicted that 50% of workers will be freelancers by 2025.

It's great news, and it's certainly in line with what we're hearing. In the customer survey cited throughout this report, when asked what proportion of their customer service volume could be handled by the GigCX crowd by 2025, 40% of our customers stated '20-40%' and half of them indicated over 40% and 90% said they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to invest more budget in GigCX in the next three years.

As we continued our research, our GigCX Expert survey respondents and CX leaders reiterated what we've already experienced over the years as GigCX has grown: people really like talking to other users when it comes to getting informed, personalized answers in a customer service setting. Whether it's solving an issue with a subscription, a tech troubleshooting question, or getting an informed answer about how to use a product or service, people want answers from someone with real hands-on experience.

Mike Flannagan, Vice President, Microsoft explains the human, user-centric benefit of GigCX as he sees it via the Microsoft GigCX customer service resource:

“

That ability to connect people who are not only experts in something, but passionate and expert fans of it - that is a real consumer brand benefit. It's an opportunity for us to find the right places where we have really passionate advocates and to tap into that to make sure that our customers feel like that person that's supporting them really, really gets it and loves the product.”

- Mike Flannagan, Microsoft

As our conversations with experts progressed, Mike Havard, Group Director of Davies Group also highlighted the human connection and empathy:

“

Who would you rather get advice from? Someone who's been a loyal and good customer who is intimate with the product for the last eight years, or somebody who's just been trained, for two weeks, and put into a customer service role without any experience of the product, or any empathy with the customer? It's about the intimacy and knowledge, the product and brand advocacy, and empathy with the customer base.” - Mike Havard, Davies Group

Over the past year, Gartner has estimated that by 2023, the gig worker model will account for **35% of the customer service workforce.**



A View from CX Leaders

In a future-focused note rooted in the optimism that drives us, 80% of our customers felt that GigCX experts could take on further, different types of tickets than they do today if given the chance. It's something that many of our CX leaders noted as well:

“

Companies shouldn't see GigCX just as an overflow resource or triage for simple queries. You need to embrace it alongside your inhouse resources. GigCX brings a certain expertise and empathy meaning it can handle complex queries such as providing refunds, changing addresses, order updates, order processing, pre-sales enquiries, etc.”

Merijn te Booij
EVP & GM of Genesys Employee Engagement Solutions

We couldn't agree more. In fact, the possibilities seem endless. GigCX has not only gone from strength to strength over the past few years, but its use cases have also evolved rapidly. As this report was being written, we were proud to announce a joint win with eBay for 'Best Customer Engagement Initiative' in the 2021 ECCCSA awards, for the role GigCX is playing in connecting eBay's most successful Sellers with those looking for advice and coaching to sell their own items.

From online marketplace seller setup questions, to subscription customer service queries, to like-minded peers putting their heads together to deliver honest answers surrounding products and services, it's safe to say GigCX is becoming an integral mainstream customer experience resource pool faster than we ever thought possible.

We hope that you find this year's report both useful and compelling, and if you find you have questions about how GigCX may benefit your organization, feel free to come to us for an honest and open conversation.

An Overview of the key findings from the GigCX survey

CX leader survey

Reasons for moving to GigCX

40%

said increasing flexibility and the ability to handle demand volatility



30%

said reducing costs and increasing quality



9 out of 10 surveyed

said they felt that GigCX had met or exceeded their expectations and were 'likely' or 'very likely' to invest more budget in GigCX in the next three years.



Proportion of their customer service could be handled by GigCX in 2025

90%
of those surveyed felt that over 20%



50%
of those surveyed felt that over 40%



20%
of those surveyed felt that over 80%



GigCX expert survey

85%

of those doing GigCX say it has had a positive impact on their mental wellbeing.



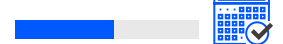
76%

of GigCX Experts indicated that GigCX has introduced them to new skills including communication, problem solving, and time management.



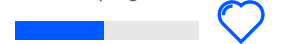
55%

of those doing GigCX say that the top motivation is 'flexibility to work on my own schedule.'



44%

say that they 'enjoy the satisfaction it brings when helping others.'



47% of those doing GigCX today had lost full time employment or had hours cut due to COVID-19



Profiling the GigCX Experts

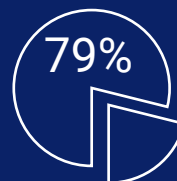


Age differences...

GenZ and Millenials (18-40) now make up 79% of current Gig Experts (up from 65% last year)



2020



2021

Although the average age has dropped, there is still large representation from all age groups

Respondents of the survey

81%

were educated to an undergraduate level or above (72% in 2020)

39%

were at manager level or above in their job

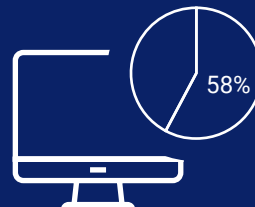


The survey shows an increasing level of education in Experts

Occupational splits...

58%

worked either in IT or customer service roles (up from 44% last year)



These job roles excellently match the skills required in GigCX

Sources of income

54%

were either in full or part time employment showing a large amount of those that gig use it as a source of secondary income.



55%

of Experts do GigCX daily, with most for an hour or two.



Whilst the majority of those that do GigCX use it as a source of secondary income, they are still active, using it to earn everyday



Experts are from 34 countries, 6 continents, speaking 56 languages

78%

of those asked were multilingual - with some speaking up to 9 languages



New skills

76%

say GigCX has introduced them to new skills



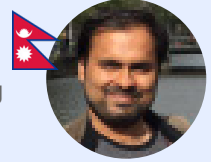
These stats show the GigCX crowd are a diverse group of people

GigCX is introducing Experts to skills such as communication, time management, and problem solving

Meet the GigCX Experts

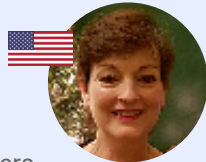
The global GigCX crowd is a diverse set of people from 34 countries, 6 continents, speaking 56 languages. Consisting of students, retirees, full time carers, and full and part time workers from all sectors – read more about a selection of GigCX Experts below.

Saurav



Saurav is a graduate engineer working in a company in the technical field. GigCX gives him the ability to earn without commitment on hours meaning he can be flexible to earn any time during the day. He spends his earnings partly on travelling to new places or investing in correct places to enhance his savings.

Susan



Susan is an Expert for Sunbasket who enjoys cooking and gardening. She likes GigCX as she can help others with many of the same questions she had herself when she first began cooking. She normally answers questions early in the morning with her coffee and on her days off from her full-time job. She uses her earnings to splurge on little luxuries she couldn't afford otherwise.

Maria



Maria started doing GigCX in November 2019. She enjoys GigCX as it is exciting, keeps her busy, and gives her the opportunity to earn in her free time. Mostly she spends her money on everyday goods (especially with the pandemic) but is hoping to earn more so she can upgrade her PC which she has used since she was in college.

Adeyemi



Adeyemi has always been passionate about helping people and GigCX allows him to support other users of brands that he uses and loves too. GigCX has been a great source of fulfilment and is helping him to achieve future goals. He spends his earnings to cater for basic needs and in building a structure to help less privileged people get into the technological ecosystem in his local area.

Mark



Mark is a coin dealer who operates on eBay. He enjoys sharing his ideas and almost two decades of experience with new and old eBay members as a GigCX Expert - and is still learning himself. He finds the money handy and the hours he spends are perfect for him, as he fits it in around his own business. The money he earns goes on upgrading his car and saving for a long haul holiday.

Philipp



Philipp is currently studying business administration at university. GigCX gives him the flexibility to earn extra money without being required to work a certain number of hours and he can do it when he has the time - which is great as a student. Philipp spends his earnings on everyday expenses, savings, and hopefully on wonderful trips to gain experience when regulations allow!

Marcia



Marcia is a graduate, an administrator, a factory worker and an eBay member where she sells home and gift items. She loves giving advice and sharing her experiences of buying and selling with others, and learning herself at the same time. What Marcia loves about GigCX is that it's flexible with time and she gets paid – and she spends that money on clothes on eBay!

Traditional Models Are Struggling To Keep Up

The days of the traditional contact center being the only channel and model for customer service are certainly in the past.

Changing customer demands, changing worker demands, and of course COVID have all driven a deluge of ways customer service professionals can work, opening up new channels for customers to contact brands with queries over the last decade.

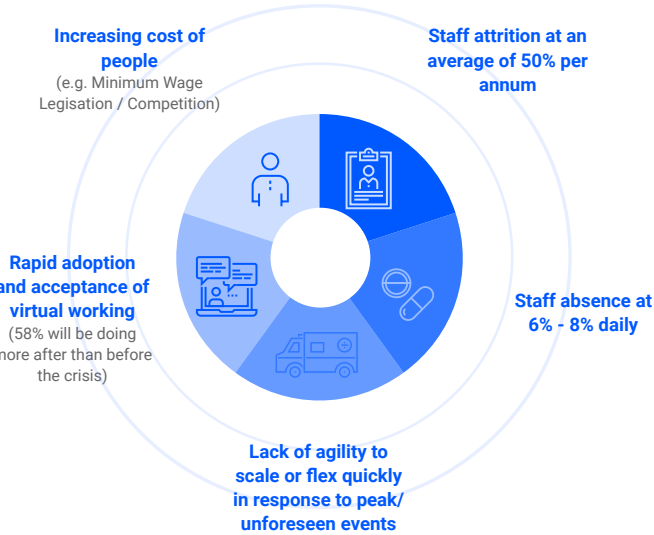


Figure 1 – Common problems for traditional call centers (Davies Group)

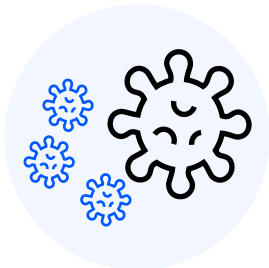
A particularly prominent new model is the Work From Home (WFH) model, and while there is some crossover between GigCX and WFH, it’s important to define where the differences lie from both an employee and company perspective.

Work from home	GigCX
Customer Service Agent	Qualified Brand Expert and loyal customer
Employee (FT/PT) or Freelancer pays to join program	Freelancer (no costs to join platform)
Formal training with long speed to competency	Expert qualification & fast speed to competency
Employee paid per hour	Expert paid per task
Hourly rate commercial model	Pay per resolved case pricing
People only including management/supporting functions	GigCX platform & end to end management service
Scheduled	Unscheduled
Standard flexibility linked to scheduling model	Increased flexibility due to on demand model
Annual attrition > 50%	No concept of attrition with on demand model
Need to be trained across all inquiry types	Handle specific inquiry types on a modular basis

As you can see from the comparison above, the two models are very different. In short, where WFH agents are full time, part time, or working on a freelance basis, GigCX Experts are members of the gig economy.

Of course many contact center workers have been forced to work from home because of COVID. However, unlike GigCX Experts who have maintained or even increased engagement, we’re seeing companies that employ WFH contact center agents begin to suffer from attrition, poor development, morale and quality issues. This is because traditional contact centers are still suffering all the same issues they’ve always had, and some of these have gotten worse with remote working. Gig Experts on the other hand choose to work from home (averaging only several hours a week) rather than being scheduled to work, which is quite different psychologically.

Changing customer demands, changing worker demands, and of course COVID have all driven a deluge of ways customer service professionals can work, opening up new channels for customers to contact brands with queries over the last decade.



The Growing Importance Of Good Gig

Until recent years, people operating within the gig economy have always been separated from standard employment regulations. However, the dramatic rise of gig over the last few years, driven by changing worker and customer profile and expectations, has rightfully brought the treatment of gig workers under the microscope both from the customers being served by the gig workers and the Governments responsible for protecting them.

This has driven a demand from national governments to promote the idea of 'good gig' practices and the protection of those active in the sector, from exploitation and circumvention of labor laws. California and the UK have already offered greater clarity on how they view certain regulations in relation to gig in the form of 'Prop 22' and the UK's Supreme Court Ruling in March 2021. This has propelled change in the way gig-based companies manage their workers with other Governmental bodies considering similar regulations themselves.

Vikrum Aiyer (former VP of Global Public Policy and Strategic Communications at Postmates) has campaigned for further additions to any rolled-out version of 'Prop 22' to wider regions, including extending a hand to labor and building sustainable relationships for the long-term and prioritizing the voice of workers.

This is something we wholeheartedly believe at Limitless (it was one of our guiding principles) and we appeal for all gig-based companies to follow our [8 GoodGig Principles](#) - not just to comply with laws and regulations, but as an overall philosophy.

8 GoodGig Principles



Champion Diversity & Inclusivity

Everyone is welcome with no barriers to entry or bias.



Reward Fairly

Rewards are fair in each local market & paid in local currencies.



No Pressure

Experts have complete flexibility, no schedules, commitments or penalties.



Encourage Financial Independence

Discourage dependency by promoting financial freedom from the platform through other earning opportunities.



Remove Barriers

Ensure there are no barriers to entry or exit from the platform, and that there are minimal fees to get started, with no equipment costs, training costs or ongoing subscription/access costs.



Protect People

Protect Experts in each country through local gig-compliant Terms and Conditions.



Flexibility/Choice

Experts can see tasks before accepting, and leave for other Experts to complete and share the reward if necessary.



Save The Planet

Reduce contact center carbon footprint - no travel, no concrete buildings, no large IT systems, and lighting etc.

The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

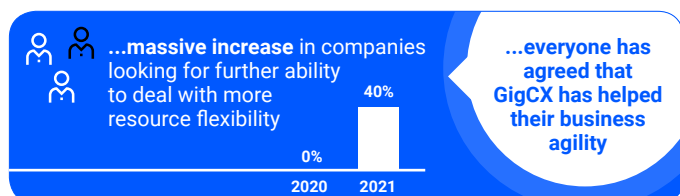
What's Driving The Growth Of GigCX?

There were significant similarities with our 2020 research surrounding the primary drivers behind the growth of GigCX. Drivers included customers' need for more empathy and knowledge to handle increasingly complex queries, the need for higher quality service to counter the fluidity of subscription models, and reducing the attrition of agents where automation isn't suitable. However, new drivers have also emerged, with marked changes in how companies are prioritizing them.

Traditional KPIs

Agility and Resource Flexibility

The biggest change in drivers for GigCX from the 2020 report was a massive increase in companies looking for further ability to deal with more resource flexibility - going from 0% of respondents last year to 40% seeing it as the main factor this year - and 100% of respondents already seeing it helping their business. This benefit is obvious even to the GigCX Experts themselves with 'the ability to handle changing volumes' being the biggest benefit the Experts saw themselves giving to organizations.



Nick Clark (Partner at Boston Consulting Group) explains

“Companies are looking for new working models to maximise flexibility. As in-house service teams become more diverse and multi-skilled, GigCX teams can help maintain service levels by handling volatile demand volumes”

- Nick Clark, BCG

This agility is key to many CX leaders nowadays, who need to deal with varying levels of demand - both planned, and unplanned (such as COVID). The remote nature of GigCX Experts is giving them business continuity assurance, and access to a pool of talent with a fast speed to competency.

Quality

Unsurprisingly, quality was a key factor for the CX leaders we asked (almost a third of respondents saw this to be their main reason for implementing GigCX.) Both the empathy and in-depth product knowledge (as users of the product/service) displayed by GigCX Experts are helping them to handle increasingly complex queries from customers.

Brett Frazer (Vice President of Customer Service at Sunbasket, a meal delivery company on a mission to empower people to live their healthiest lives) and Scott Murray (Chief Operating Officer at Collective Health) stood behind the empathy benefits of GigCX, seeing it both as a massive advantage for a GigCX Expert over traditional agents, and vital in sensitive industries such as healthcare.

In fact, Brett has even been using GigCX Experts to help train his inhouse team on their empathy skills

“The GigCX experts have a personal visceral experience of what it is like to be a Sunbasket customer. This is a huge advantage, especially when it comes to empathy. We've built on that concept to create a brand new training programme for our internal customer service agents, that addresses empathy in an entirely different way.” - Brett Frazer, Sunbasket

The other driver of quality that our CX leaders emphasized was knowledge. Jackie Craver, Vice President, Community Support at Zwift (at home cycling & running virtual app), has found that GigCX Experts in her community “understand mechanics, gearing, and equipment to a level of detail that an employee may never have”.

Mike Flannagan summarizes the benefit of GigCX knowledge brilliantly

“There's no substitute for someone who is a passionate user of a product, and who can answer questions about something that another user of that product wants to know.” - Mike Flannagan, Microsoft

Reducing Costs

The one third of respondents whose primary reason for choosing GigCX was reducing costs in their CX operations found that GigCX had either already helped them achieve it, or was starting to help them to do so. It was also a popular benefit seen by those not looking at it as a primary driver.

This pattern was also borne out in our in-depth interviews. Dennis Pollett (Senior Product Manager at Microsoft) said:

“We targeted to improve either quality or cost without negatively impacting the other – we ended up improving both massively and adding increased flexibility as a bonus.” - **Dennis Pollett, Microsoft**

What we've also seen is that costs are often lowered as a bi-product of the other benefits. If quality is increased and personal knowledge is used correctly, then customers are less likely to need multiple conversations to solve their problem, and in less time.

New KPIs

Customer Lifetime Value

This period of history will forever be defined by human disconnection. In its place, digital transformation initiatives have accelerated to keep up with the pace of change. Organizations have had to pivot, adopting their strategies in order to reach their Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) metrics which rely on empathy and support.

As a result, the relationship between GigCX and CLV has become intertwined, as companies strive to achieve that 'human' touch in a virtual world. To that end, customer loyalty can no longer be assumed as a given for brands, no matter how innovative or experimental the product on offer is. What really counts is the personal connection and relationship on offer. After all, determining Customer Lifetime Value is all about estimating an entire future relationship with a customer - 'relationship' being the key word.

Customer Success

The term 'Customer Success' has traditionally been defined in terms of technology, but as a definition and metric, it has begun to evolve. Customer Success now means redesigning

the CX journey so that customers see value at every step. It's about proactively engaging with the customer before they need help, and making that engagement opportunity continual, so that it doesn't just happen when it's time to submit a customer service query.

GigCX works with customer experience journeys so that the customer gets value from the product or service at every point in time, as opposed to simply providing a customer support function which waits for something to go wrong. Companies are measuring customer success based on the success they are experiencing with increased positive engagement along all touchpoints in the customer journey.

Jon Cummins (VP Services and Customer Success at Sage) explains:

“Think of customer success, what you want for your customers. Think of ecosystems and how you want your customers or potential customers to be able to become aware of your propositions and gain confidence in them. If we think about customer success, advocacy, brand and impact, it's easy to see what is the right CX channel at the time.” - **Jon Cummins, Sage**

Sue Morris (Vice President, Customer Success at GitHub) points this out as a major driver she sees with GigCX:

“With service becoming such a huge brand differentiator, most leaders are realizing it's time to harness brand advocates. It's an opportunity to embrace not just customer service surrounding products, but around the whole customer lifecycle.” - **Sue Morris, GitHub**

COVID

When we surveyed our GigCX Experts we found;

47% had lost full time employment or had hours cut due to COVID-19



46% said they became a GigCX Expert over the past year due to pandemic



In this sense, they are in the perfect position to empathize with prospects and customers who have also felt life-changing impacts of the pandemic.

Another driver associated with COVID were the huge fluctuations in demand levels and customer behavior caused by governmental restrictions. The ability to flex with that demand has become more important than ever. Jackie Craver has seen these demand spikes, with Zwift exploding during lockdown, driving huge volumes to its existing customer services which led Zwift to adopting GigCX:

“

Hiring for customer service roles, including posting, interviewing, onboarding and getting up to speed, takes months to do. We had this massive demand for support and a lack of supply of support agents just because of timing - so it was such an amazing opportunity to meet our need and the need of people for jobs. The time was ripe to push this through.”

- Jackie Craver, Zwift

Of course even outside of COVID, as Scott Murray explains, demand volatility is common for many organizations.

“

E-commerce is a great example. During holiday seasons, there is a lot of hiring to do in a very compressed period of time, and a GigCX model can really help with that scalability and actually help to reduce some of the infrastructure costs surrounding seasonality.”

- Scott Murray, Collective Health

Nick Clark sees this becoming even more of a benefit with the increasing drive towards digital:

“

Companies have realized that they need to grow their connection with customers, and within that, customers serving other customers can play a big role. It is those who are very focused on CX where we'll see the biggest appetite for GigCX.” - Nick Clark, BCG

Jon Cummins noted that the pandemic illustrated the depth of GigCX to meet fluctuation in demand levels:

“

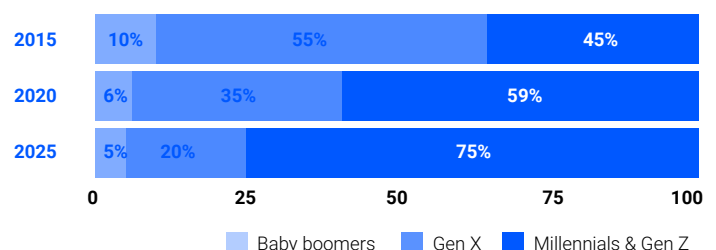
GigCX is a different way of doing things that is more flexible, accessible and available. COVID has perhaps accelerated it, and the speed of movement has really made the industry realize the art of the possible. It has also taught us that the most important thing is having access to the expertise, and ultimately location is not the obstacle many companies made it out to be.”

- Jon Cummins, Sage

A Changing Workforce

According to the [latest demographic research](#) of the global workforce, 59% of the population are Millennial and Gen Zs. What CX leaders are quickly realizing is that the needs and wants of people in these age profiles are vastly different to their predecessors, and the industry needs to adapt its working models to counter the attrition already happening.

Global workforce by age groups
2015 - 2025



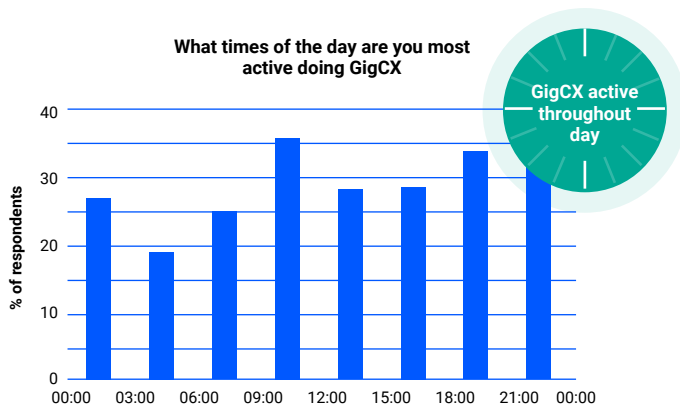
Source: AON, Upwork/Freelancers Union Survey, Everest Group (2019)

Flexibility

The first major trend we're seeing in the modern working population is a desire for flexibility in both location and hours. As previously mentioned, the pandemic has opened many people's eyes to the benefits of working from home. For many, this is the reduced cost and time spent in commuting and the ability to work the hours that suit their lifestyle.

Our survey revealed that 97% believed COVID has driven the need for more brands to allow for work from home models, and working times flexibility is the biggest benefit of GigCX.

Our behavioral survey shows this further.



The GigCX crowd working time preferences span the entire 24 hour period (boosted even further by the global nature of the crowd) indicating that the standard 9-5 day is unfavorable to many.

This demand for flexibility is particularly apt for these difficult times as Richard Small (Partner at Deloitte) points out:

“

If you can crowdsource work out to people without them having to commute, you're creating a really flexible and interesting workforce, which is particularly valuable amid an economic slump.” - Richard Small, Deloitte

Portfolio Careers

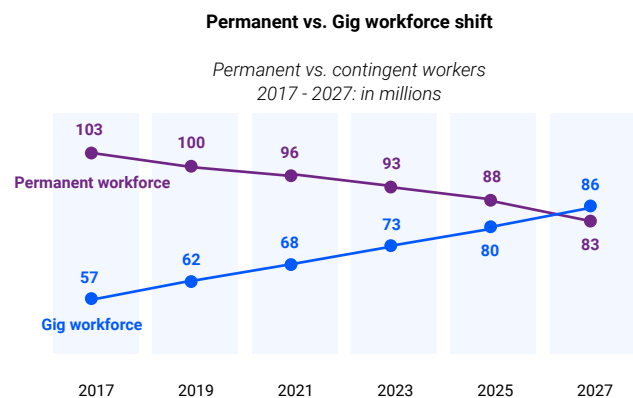
“

GigCX Experts are responsible for their own success, much like entrepreneurs.”

- Dennis Pollett, Microsoft

This entrepreneurial spirit summed up by Dennis is another theme that has helped drive the popularity of the gig in general, and GigCX in particular. Having a 'portfolio career' with multiple sources of income has been turbocharged by COVID where even the most reluctant people have realized the importance of spreading their financial risk over multiple sources of income - especially with unemployment rates hitting an all time high in the US in April 2020.

In fact, 96% of our survey respondents believe this spread is more important than ever. This is reflected in the fact that 36% of US workers are now part of the gig economy and it's predicted that the gig workforce will outnumber the permanent workforce by 2027.



Our research has found that GigCX is an excellent way to tap into highly skilled people who want to work more flexibly and would love the extra income to supplement their expendable income and give them peace of mind.

According to Mike Flannagan:

“

It attracts people that want to work differently than we expect our full time employees to work. It opens up access to a talent pool that we would otherwise not attract. It means we get the best people, via a variety of different working models. It suits our customers: they don't mind whether they are speaking to full time employees, outsourced contractors or GigCX Experts. They just want the best service. Ultimately, we'll be able to deliver better service and that's what matters most.”

- Mike Flannagan, Microsoft

The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

Most importantly, this flexibility gives companies a better chance of keeping GigCX Experts and reducing the expense that so many contact centers struggle with as they experience attrition and churn.

Anand Santhanam of Infosys sums it up perfectly:

“

Agent churn rate is a concern. In the US, there is about a 35-40% churn rate in contact centers, and in large enterprises, they are replenishing about 4000 people a year. That is a very tall order in terms of recruiting and hiring. So in this sense, GigCX could be a useful buffer to rely on, because it opens things up for people who don't necessarily want to spend their whole day in a role. You open up the possibility of engaging a different workforce, who are great, but possibly just not suited or willing to full time work.” - **Anand Santhanam, Infosys**

96% of our survey saw themselves using more digital channels for customer service in the future.



All of these statistics lend themselves to the GigCX model as Merijn te Booij explains:

“

GigCX is made for digital contact more so than voice contact, and that means that enterprises are now able to go full steam ahead into the digital world, and with the gig economy they will actually be able to do that. And they can feel more secure about doing that knowing that volume can be handled.”

- Merijn te Booij, Genesys

This all paints a clear picture of organizations seeing the future in digital, and wanting to offer another channel in the form of GigCX for their customers. Sue Morris sums it up:

“

CX leaders have had to engage more channels, and this is down to customer's expectations getting more advanced.” - **Sue Morris, GitHub**

Changing Customer Demands

These global demographic trends don't just affect the CX workforce, they also represent the customer base many organizations are now predominantly serving as well. Millennials and Gen Z demands differ in how they wish to be treated by their brands, as much as how they like to work. These changes are another driver for many organizations when deciding to change to a GigCX model.

Digital Shift

COVID and the shutting of physical stores merely accelerated a global trend in consumer behavior towards moving service and purchasing habits away from stores towards digital channels such as websites and apps. Research has shown that from 2019 to 2020, where US retail sales value rose 6.9%, the digital aspect of it rose 44.4% - with it now representing almost 21% of the overall market share.

In fact, 57% of customers would rather contact companies via digital media and 45% of customers predict digital channels will be their main way of contacting brands in the future.



Asynchronous Messaging

A more specific trend in the digital shift we've observed over the past year which is also driving demand for GigCX is the area of asynchronous messaging (think WhatsApp, or Facebook Messenger and you've got the idea).

In 2020, Facebook saw 100 billion messages every day across its WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram asynchronous messenger apps, and this massive figure is backed up by our survey where 90% of respondents said they used asynchronous messaging personally every day. So, it makes perfect sense that organizations are looking to add this channel to their customer service operations. The demand is clearly there with 91% of our survey respondents wanting to see it available.

90% of respondents said they used asynchronous messaging personally every day.



40% of our CX leaders said they saw an increase in customer service demand coming for async messaging tools, with many citing the flexibility they may be able to provide for GigCX Experts themselves - which is conducive for a higher quality conversation.

“

Asynchronous messaging will see a boost with GigCX as you could have an Expert anywhere that works 15 minutes here, an hour there, two minutes an hour later, and still do their day job at the same time as serving the customer. Asynchronous works much better for someone who works eight hours in a row. And for the customer, it means they can do their entire journey with one person to maintain rapport and consistency.” - Merijn te Booij, Genesys

Trust and Peer to Peer Reviews

Another change in customer behavior is continued dwindling trust in brands from customers. Trust in brands has dropped post-COVID, with net trust dropping 5% since before the pandemic. Review websites and social media now also have a huge influence in the buying decisions of many people, with 93% of consumers now influenced by online customer service reviews when making a buying decision.

93%

of consumers now influenced by online customer service reviews when making a buying decision.



By connecting customers with other customers whether pre or post-purchase, GigCX can clearly leverage this trend by allowing customers to communicate with people they trust more than the standard faceless brand. By making it clear they are talking with another customer who has first-hand knowledge of the brand but is not employed directly by the brand - it's clear why many customers would prefer this to a standard agent.

Our CX leaders backed this view of GigCX, with Leigh Hopwood - CEO of the Contact Center Management Association (CCMA) predicting:

“

There has been a rise in the use of reviews and review sites to support buying decisions. Where GigCX may become more prevalent is in the pre-sales environment where people looking to buy a product or service can engage with real customers of that product or service to get genuine support and advice.” - Leigh Hopwood, CCMA

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Mike Havard had an easily understood analogy to describe the level of trust generated by the crowd:

“

I don't think of GigCX as a resourcing tool, and it's not a sort of outsourcing alternative. I think of it as something quite new and powerful. The nearest analogy to me is TripAdvisor. Look at how that has transformed the way people get opinion, on hotels or on a destination. It's by trusting the crowd, not the hotel.” - **Mike Havard, Davies Group**

Diversity and Inclusivity

As is often the case, there are drivers and benefits surrounding GigCX that may not be as measurable, but are equally impactful. For example, consider diversity, inclusivity, and social responsibility:

GigCX champions diversity and inclusivity principles where there is no bias in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation driving to ensure all are treated equally, making everyone welcome with no barriers to entry - giving brands access to a whole new talent pool they often previously couldn't.

As Mark Hillary says:

“

When you start talking about a gig model where people are allowed to work from home and no longer have to commute, and are no longer tied to an eight hour day - then it really speaks to D&I. Even things like tapping into retired workers are really important. It's an enormous and really genuine opportunity. It's a real opportunity to let people set their own timetable and agenda, rather than hoping their boss will let them go to the school play.”

- **Mark Hillary**

The profile of our crowd bears this out, consisting of a mixture of students, full time carers, retirees, full and part time workers, from 34 countries, 6 continents, speaking 56 languages.

The surveyed GigCX Experts



The Pandemic Dispelled Many Myths About WFH — Now It's Gig's Turn

Execs In The Know is a global community of senior customer experience (CX) leaders.

Our Industry's Challenge: People Want People

Throughout 2020, our CX leader community has underscored their challenges in finding and keeping the right people to work remotely. Contact volumes have ballooned in some industries, while some companies cut deeper than they needed to in their initial response to the crisis. Although new self-service technologies have been fast-tracked across the industry to help offset these circumstances, GigCX is uniquely positioned to ride to the rescue. Not only can GigCX deliver what customers want (live engagement), it can also offer several advantages over traditional staffing models, including reduced costs, greater flexibility, access to a wider talent pool, and, oftentimes, improved customer satisfaction (CSAT) results. But hasn't this always been the case? So why haven't more brands tapped into gig resources up until now?

Changing Minds in the Midst of a Crisis

The global pandemic, and the sweeping changes that followed, quickly put to rest many long-held notions about our industry's ability to support Work From Home (WFH) advisors. This happened out of necessity, but we suspect we'll see a similar phenomenon occur in 2021 with regards to GigCX. In many ways this transformation was already well underway within our community, but now we're seeing the right ingredients come together to further accelerate this transformation, especially when considering [research results](#) indicating many brands are fast-tracking strategic initiatives in response to the pandemic.

Brett Frazer of Sunbasket and an EITK Corporate Advisory Board member, has seen perceptions starting to shift as a result of recent events.

"Historically, trust and control have been significant barriers for a lot of companies when it comes to gig. The pandemic and sudden shift to work-from-home has started to change some minds on this. Companies are seeing that work can get done from anywhere, and control is less about where people are versus who is right for the job and, more importantly, right for the brand. At Sunbasket, tapping into GigCX means tapping into the biggest fans of our brand, no matter where they sit."

GigCX is definitely on the radar of many of the brands we work with, if not already on their roadmap or put into practice. For organizations facing challenges related to staffing up, cutting per-engagement costs, or fielding a brand-enthusiast workforce, GigCX is worth a closer look. It's a transformation that's exciting Brett, and other gig-believers in the community, who have long been espousing the advantages of gig and GigCX.

"The necessity of WFH, ushered in by the pandemic, has helped some of our community members validate and grow their support for gig. For others, the shift to WFH has provided an opportunity to take a fresh, new look at their support models and, for many, GigCX is now front and center."

Chad McDaniel
Co-Founder and President
Execs In The Know



What Obstacles Remain For GigCX?

Is it still a leap of faith?

GigCX isn't a one size fits all model, and for some companies, it may still be regarded as a big departure from how they've traditionally handled customer service. Here's what our leaders had to say about making the leap of faith:

“Look ahead, and think differently. Don't see service in a traditional way as being reserved for contact center. If the range of customers that you have are broad, you need to make sure that the range of channels you have, have enough sophistication in them to cater to a full range of user needs.”

- Jon Cummins, Sage

“We used to refer to GigCX as the giffgaff model. They were always top of the list in terms of customer experience, cost, NPS, response times - all of those key dimensions. I was always intrigued why something so successful wasn't being adopted by others. It might have been that there was a big voice dependency at the time, or that it was outside of people's comprehension. Nowadays though, it's got some of the most iconic, recognizable and influential brands in the world using it, from Microsoft to eBay.”

- Mike Havard, Davies Group

Our conversations with our customers proves that GigCX is delivering quality answers and service that brands love. Given the diversity and education our GigCX Experts bring to the table, it's no surprise that GigCX is delivering. As Mike Havard indicated, GigCX is used by major brands such as Microsoft, eBay, Unilever, Sage, DAZN, L'Oreal, and Zwift, and to top it off, the GigCX program delivered with eBay and Limitless won the 2020 Best Customer Engagement award at the recent European Contact Center and Customer Services Awards.

Security

Another significant obstacle that first comes to the mind of many with GigCX is the question of security. As Merijn te Booij of Genesys says:

“I think there's a level of security anxiety as well. It's probably strange for companies to trust someone they haven't trained with their customers. But other gig models have demonstrated that it can work and provide value to both businesses and consumers.”

- Merijn te Booij, Genesys

However what several of our CX leaders pointed out is that these security worries are overblown when considered as a risk relative to the traditional contact center model. Anand Santhanam said:

“I think the most obvious one is security. However, it's not necessarily the issue that people think it is. In chatting with many enterprises, there is the illusion that they can control security because people come in to work in a contact center - because the people have done their biometric or physical ID card authentication, etc. But if there is a malicious intent to steal information, it can happen just as easily in a supervised environment like a contact center as it can in a home environment.”

- Anand Santhanam, Infosys



[Read press release](#)

Mark Hillary also points out that with COVID driving a new work from home culture and that security may no longer be the issue companies originally made it out to be:

“

If you were speaking to prospects in 2019, one of the issues with GigCX may have been data security, and companies being wary about customer information going into people's homes. In 2020, everyone in CX is working from home - all traditional contact center employees are working from home and they are clearly proving that you can have a disparate network of agents.” - Mark Hillary

“

It's not about taking control away: it's adding elements to your primary workforce, and helping them to be fantastic. Because that's the goal right - it's not the goal to make the gig economy your primary workers. It's to create a kind of a mobile ecosystem of expertise, which now has a gap, and that gap is filled by the gig economy.”

- Merijn te Booij, Genesys

Control

What's holding some organizations back from GigCX is they feel they have little control. They may have had bad experiences in the past with outsourcing communities, or from automation/chatbots.

Here, a few of our experts weigh in:

“

I think one barrier is a bit of fear around loss of control. Suddenly, there's going to be this ethereal group of people out there who are magically going to take these questions to come in. But for us, the ability for the Experts to handle large volumes was a nice surprise, and quality is a common goal that we partner well with our GigCX providers on.” - Dennis Pollett, Microsoft

The Expert survey certainly suggested there'd be little problem with control over having enough cover, with 91% believing they could take on more tasks, and almost half of respondents believing they could take on over 50% more tasks. The CX leader survey backs this up with almost 90% of current GigCX users saying it has helped them achieve their primary goal of improving agility and quality levels.

Mike Havard had an interesting explanation behind some of the barriers companies see with GigCX, and he described these barriers in terms of putting together different components or silos to work together in the way the diagram below illustrates:



Mike describes the opportunities that these silo challenges present on the next page.



The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

“

This is the first time that you are really seeing four parts of typically siloed companies coming together in a really powerful way. You've got the operations where they are benefiting from low cost flexible resources, to help improve service levels to manage customer experience better. You've also got the marketing community who are getting brand advocacy and you are getting the opportunity for positive and viral noise of advocates.

And then the other two components are the digital and the technology teams where again, for the first time you're bringing them into the party in a single platform that is helping improve the effectiveness and efficiency of those digital channels and making that easy across legacy technology.

So, this isn't just a resourcing tool, and it's not a sort of outsourcing alternative. It's something quite new and powerful. However, wrapped up in that powerful idea, is a challenge. And the challenge is that companies haven't been very good at getting those four silos to work together.” - Mike Havard, Davies Group

Reputation and Reform

As mentioned earlier, the gig economy in general has been under scrutiny over the past few years as it has grown. Stories around the exploitation and lack of protection for gig workers has led to a negative perception of the gig economy as a whole - with GigCX somewhat caught in the crossfire.

“

The barriers that you had a year ago have definitely been reduced e.g. working from home, security, data. But I think basically it's the terminology itself, with the gig economy which has had a lot of bad press.” - Mark Hillary

“

During COVID, there have been some industry sectors where we have seen negative aspects of the gig economy. For example, where gig workers have not been able to access the government's support or the welfare system because they don't have a sufficient employment track record.”

- Richard Small, Deloitte

Where, encouragingly, the laws around the gig economy as a whole are being reformed with changes such as Prop 22 leading the way, many of the issues are easily avoided with GigCX best practice anyway. This best practice can avoid 'dependency' due to high entrance and exit barriers and penalization for inactivity, the inability to 'choose' or 'substitute' a task, and lack of 'neutrality' in control.

In fact, the GigCX Expert survey revealed that:

76%

felt that GigCX has introduced them to new skills that will help them in their career such as communication, problem solving, and time management.



85%

feel that GigCX has helped improve their mental wellbeing.



86%

believing that GigCX is seen more positively compared to other gig providers.



So where the term 'gig' and the connotations that come with it, has been seen as a barrier for GigCX, what our research has shown is that this is an education problem, rather than a systemic issue, with GigCX being rooted in GoodGig principles. Hopefully these principles can lead the way for further reform in labor laws and protection of gig workers.

What Lies In The Future For GigCX?

Ticket Types

A large question for many industry leaders when it comes to GigCX is the proportion of tickets the crowd can take on in its operations. PII, compliance, and complexity are major factors when working out how many queries can be routed to GigCX and the size of this barrier then differs depending on the industry you operate in.

The appetite from the Experts is certainly there, with 92% believing they can take on more complex queries in the future, and 91% believing they have more capacity to take on tasks (with 48% feeling they could take on at least 50% more). The CX leaders felt the same way, with 80% feeling that Experts could answer complex queries beyond basic inquiry types.

GigCX Experts certainly have the knowledge to answer more complex questions, as Mike Flannagan explains:

“

Xbox is a great example of where hands-on product knowledge is paramount. You could train a support professional all day long on instructions surrounding how to help people using Xbox. But if you asked my neighbor's son, who is an active Xbox player a question, he'd have the answer for you a lot faster.” - Mike Flannagan, Microsoft

Some companies have raised concerns about Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and compliance and how GigCX may overcome the current issues surrounding the limitations that apply to the GigCX crowd in handling PII. However, in speaking to our CX leaders, the general consensus is that it's unlikely to be an issue going forward, and the requirements surrounding PII and compliance will be met further down the line with vetted, verified GigCX Experts who can access this information. They also envisioned technology in GigCX platforms to include features that will allow for anonymization in addition to the existing hyper-secure integration with client systems going forward - reducing the risk of any data breach and allowing experts to handle more inquiry types in the future.

Overall, the picture for GigCX looks positive. When we asked the leaders how much of their customer service operations will be GigCX by 2025:

90%

believed at least 20% of their workforce would be GigCX, 50% over 40% with 20% believing it to be over 80%.



90%

likely to invest more budget into GigCX over the next 3 years (up from 60% last year).



Post-COVID Relevancy

COVID has undoubtedly helped to drive the growth of GigCX, accelerating organizational, customer, and workforce trends that were all forcing organizations to adapt or risk being left behind. What does this mean for GigCX when the immediate effects of the pandemic have gone however?

What we are seeing is that with the trends in customer behavior and workforce demands already heading in the direction they are now before COVID, a lot of these changes are here to stay. 89% of UK contact center leaders say that the COVID crisis has changed the UK contact center industry forever. This is backed up by statistics from Criteo showing that 83% of Americans who discovered at least one form of online shopping, want to continue using it - showing the digital shift is here to stay.

89%

of UK contact center leaders say that the COVID crisis has changed the UK contact center industry forever.



The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

Meanwhile, less than one in five executives say they want to give up the flexibility of working from home post-pandemic, suggesting new working demands will remain.

Mark Hillary sees these changes representing a significant long term change:

“

There's an acceleration of planned digital transformation, where companies that already had, for example, a sort of three year vision of where they wanted to go, and this is now being accelerated. GigCX is definitely part of this in many instances.” - **Mark Hillary**

The Full Customer Lifecycle

A trend that arose from many of our interviews was an appetite to use GigCX throughout the full customer lifecycle and beyond - including pre-purchase, customer success, customer feedback, user experience testing, translations, public relations, and beyond.

Customer success is already looking to be a major theme of the customer experience industry for the next few years, with customer lifetime value and customer churn lending itself much more to a need for proactive service, rather than fixing things when they go wrong. This is especially true in the B2C industry where scaling the traditional customer success team you'll see in a B2B business is often not financially viable.

This is where many of our leaders could see the benefit in a scalable crowd of brand advocates:

“

There is a real complexity ladder that GigCX can accommodate. Companies are looking at using GigCX for market research, as there is significant potential in using their insights to improve products and solutions. They are also educating bots, and writing documentation. It's an opportunity to embrace not just customer service surrounding products, but around the whole customer lifecycle.” - **Sue Morris, GitHub**

Pre-purchase was another area that our research showed many thought GigCX would be able to help. Our survey revealed that 80% of respondents thought they'd be more likely to buy a product, if they had a chance to speak to a user of that product beforehand. The most popular reason was a belief that the knowledge and empathy an Expert can provide, would help swing any purchasing decision.

Jackie Craver at Zwift can envision GigCX being a key part of growth efforts going forward:

“

I think the acquisition side is really interesting - I can envision a community of ambassadors, starting to really be a little mini PR team for Zwift.”

- **Jackie Craver, Zwift**

Our CX leaders also suggested several other unique ways they see the GigCX crowd being leveraged in the future:

“

There's potential to apply the gig in different ways, including market research, user research and product research.” - **Scott Murray, Collective Health**

“Something else we've done with GigCX is implement translation in the gig model so that we could better connect people to getting answers in their own language and get responses in 10 minutes instead of 12 hours. This was a win for both our customers and a win for the Experts in having more threads they could answer in their area of expertise.”

- **Dennis Pollett, Microsoft**

“I think over time, enterprises would like to have a model of saying that there is a larger pool of people that are limitless. They could be marketers, or they could be product reviewers with the capacity to deliver instant feedback or even content moderation.” - **Anand Santhanam, Infosys**

The Modern Customer Service Model

GigCX puts customers at the heart of customer experience

COVID, like any obstacle/threat, has provided its fair share of opportunities for the customer service industry. What our research illustrated time and time again was that while the pandemic accelerated the trends we're seeing right now, they were already bubbling away long before it happened. What COVID did was bring them to the surface, and embolden people to make them the questions for today, rather than tomorrow.

This has led to fast, sweeping changes to the average brand's customer service operations model - with those changes not yet finished. So where does GigCX fit into this 'new normal' - and where does it now sit in the technology adoption life cycle?

We asked all of our CX leaders this question, with the following results;

“**Jon Cummins, Sage** - “It's at different stages for different situations, industries, and personnel. When it becomes part of your operating models and part of your business ecosystem, then you know it has crossed the chasm. The more complex the business process, the more important the community is able to work with that complexity - for me GigCX will be utilized more once it's an important part of our integrated customer journey.”

“**Leigh Hopwood, CCMA** - “I think we'll see GigCX continue as a complimentary business model, one that supports the more traditional approach. It is clear that GigCX workers are incredibly passionate about the work that they do and are real advocates of the brands that they work with because they are customers of those brands. There are scenarios where this is more relevant.”

“**Jackie Craver, Zwiift** - “I see it as an ongoing strategic channel with intentional roles and ways that fits into a menu of options that I offer. GigCX will not be the be-all end-all complete support experience but where we can carve out tasks that are strategically valuable and offer incremental support that an employee may never be able to do - we will use it. It's an intentional growth strategy for us as a company.”

“**Nick Clark, BCG** - “Companies have realized that they need to grow their connection with their customers, and within that, customers serving other customers plays a big role. It's the companies that are very focused on customer experience where we'll see the biggest appetite for GigCX.”

“**Merijn te Booij, Genesys** - “In our estimation, almost half of all customer agents will be employed to this type of contract, and it will be a rock solid element of any customer engagement strategy. You need to embrace it as a whole alongside your primary agents.”

The 2021 Gig Customer Service Report

Where all our CX leaders agree is that GigCX isn't a one-size fits all solution that will displace all internal customer service staff, BPOs, and automation software. What it should be, is a way of engaging with your customers all the way throughout the customer lifecycle, that can be used as part of a hybrid model in a fully integrated manner.

How much of this model will consist of GigCX, will depend heavily on the industry, with our leaders predicting a range of anything between 20-80%+. What's clear, is that there is a crowd of passionate advocates in your customer base that are ready for the challenge, and your other customers have an appetite to be helped by them.

This modern hybrid-model inevitably then raises the question of which customers should be served by which channel? This is where intelligent routing, that evolves over time, is integral to success. Both GigCX and customer service in general should operate like a successful dating app - sending the right customer, to the right channel, at the right time in order to get the right result.

This is why Genesys, recently investing in the GigCX industry represents a huge opportunity to businesses and indicates that the major players as a whole see GigCX as a must-have in their operating models. We asked Genesys why they have invested in the technology:

“

For us, where it started wasn't with customers that needed an address change or help with billing or with repetitive things, it was for customers that required empathy. That meant a paradigm shift in looking at agents and the entire equation of customer service. We needed to build our engagement scenario and strategy around human capital.

What we noticed is that we were missing a certain level of flexibility in the empathy category. We were looking for a digital empathy capability with brand loyalty - people who know what they're talking about and who are utterly flexible in their living and their way of being. And people who like doing what they're doing. We were able to empower these people, and pay them for their fair share of the work, based on the quality that they provide to the customer. It was very easy to combine our primary workforce focus to apply a strong human element in everything customer related. We thought: let's combine that and see if we can use technology to make those choices where we think which resource will be best suited to solve which question. This was what led us to invest in GigCX.”



 GENESYS™

With major brands such as Geneys, Microsoft, Unilever, eBay, L'Oreal, and Zwift committing to the GigCX model, and the obstacles that are keeping other brands from following quickly falling, we believe that GigCX is firmly in the maturity part of the technology adoption life cycle.

We predict by this time next year, when we come to write the next edition of this report - we'll be looking at a CX industry much less entrenched in traditional operating models, and investing in more dynamic and all encompassing customer service processes.

In 2022, we'll be looking at a CX industry much less entrenched in traditional operating models, and investing in more dynamic and all encompassing customer service processes.



About Limitless

Limitless is a gig customer service (GigCX) platform, combining crowdsourcing and AI to help global businesses address their biggest customer service challenges. Brands like Microsoft, Unilever, Sage, eBay and L'Oreal are using Limitless' SmartCrowd™ technology to connect with their most engaged customers and reward them for providing on-demand customer service that can flex in line with demand.

The traditional call center model is broken and cannot meet the needs of today's digital consumer. Imagine a solution with no fixed headcount, no shifts to schedule, no agent turnover and no wait times. The Limitless gig customer service platform does this by harnessing the knowledge of product experts worldwide delivering a much-needed step change in customer experience at a lower cost.

For companies that can no longer tolerate stagnating customer service quality and rising costs, and who need to address increasing complexity, volatile demand, increased attrition, and the need for diversity, the answer is GigCX.

As a pioneer in GoodGig™ practices, Limitless is one of the world's first global tech platforms to introduce localized platform terms to protect the rights of its users. Named a Rising Star at Deloitte's Technology Fast 50 programme and backed by Genesys, Redline Capital, AlbionVC, Downing Ventures, and Unilever Ventures, Limitless is empowering people worldwide to earn money for providing brilliant customer service for the brands they love.

For more information visit our website at www.limitlesstech.com or contact us at www.limitlesstech.com/contact

About Execs In The Know

Execs In The Know believes that advancements in customer success are created when leaders share experiences, outlooks, and insights – "Leaders Learning From Leaders." Their mission is to advance the conversation on all facets of the customer experience to improve individual brand experiences and the industry as a whole. They do this by connecting global customer experience professionals to valuable content, live and virtual events, thought leadership, industry insights, peer-to-peer collaboration, networking opportunities, and more.

For more information visit our website at www.execsintheknow.com

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