Execs In The Know

CX LEADERS
TRENDS & INSIGHTS
CORPORATE EDITION

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CRESTA

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PREFACE

This report, the *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: 2021 Corporate Edition,* is the follow-up to the 2021 Consumer Edition report of the same name released in October 2021. Together, the pair yield a 360-degree view of the customer experience (CX). From preferences to outcomes and the journey in between, the *CX Leaders Trends and Insights* series is designed to provide a wide lens view of the industry, touching on many topics, including consumer preferences, CX strategies, best practices, and so much more. Results are further enhanced by Practitioner Perspectives, snapshot commentaries from CX leaders who are today driving CX excellence across a variety of industries.

Unique to this edition is the Consumer Comparison section (page 62). This section provides a number of select findings that allow the reader to compare and contrast results from the two separate editions, providing unique insight into sometimes differing perspectives.

Key highlights from this report include:

•   Sixty-six percent of CX leaders described the shift to work-from-home (WFH) as having a "Very Positive" or "Positive" impact on their ability to meet their customers' needs and expectations.

•   When asked which CX solutions were not currently offered but were a part of the short- to near-term plan, survey responses saw "SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)" top the list, at 57%.

•   Seventy-one percent of survey respondents indicated ongoing internal operational challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary residual challenge – workforce shortages.

As with the previously released Consumer Edition report, this Corporate Edition volume uses the below framework to describe contact channels and their associated solutions.

VOICE-BASED INTERACTIONS	**TEXT-BASED INTERACTIONS**	**SELF-HELP INTERACTIONS**	**SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTIONS**
Phone In-Person Video Chat	Online or Mobile Chat Email SMS/Text	Chatbots Mobile Apps FAQs Kiosks	Twitter Facebook Forums

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Here's to an industry ready to tackle challenge and be the change agents customers deserve. Like the previously released Consumer Edition report, this volume is intended to inform and inspire. In that vein, a massive thank you to all the CX leaders who contributed their insights and experiences as a part of this release's Practitioner's Perspectives. These individuals include:

Emily Estes

Julie Derybowski

Trish Wethman

Sheila Knight-Fields

Francisco Toledo

Jeff Lojko

Alix Bowman

TraQuenna Branch

Cindy Oberkirsch

Lori Pon

We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank our edition sponsors, Cresta, pioneers of real-time intelligence for customer conversations.

Kind Regards,

Execs In The Know

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METHODOLOGY

This report, the *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: 2021 Corporate Edition*, was developed based on results derived from a custom 90-question survey delivered via the SurveyMonkey online platform. Surveying occurred from November 2 through December 20, 2021. Private invitations to partake in the survey were delivered by email to the Execs In The Know community and via promotion within Execs In The Know's private online community, Know It All. Invitations targeted individuals responsible for managing the customer experience and customer care programs of large Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and B2C/Business-to-Business (B2B) organizations, primarily in the United States and Canada.

The survey enjoyed participation of 87 CX leaders with individual question sample sizes ranging from 66 to 87 responses. Forty-seven percent of survey participants held a title of Vice President or above, while 93% of all survey participants held the title of Director or above.
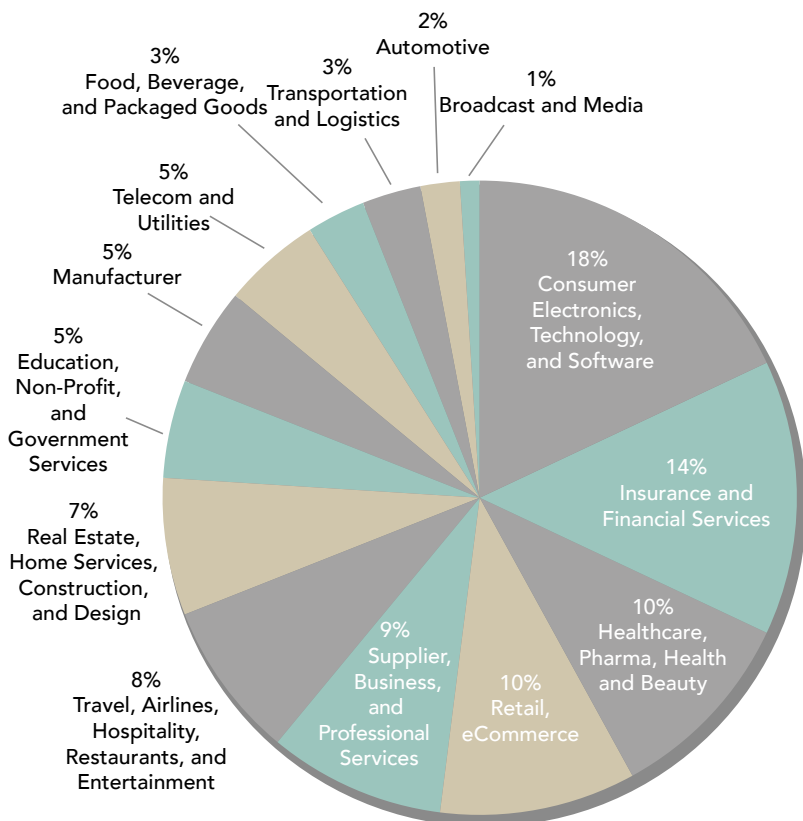
See page 7 for a detailed breakdown of this year's survey participants, including details about participation by industry, revenue, and customer type.
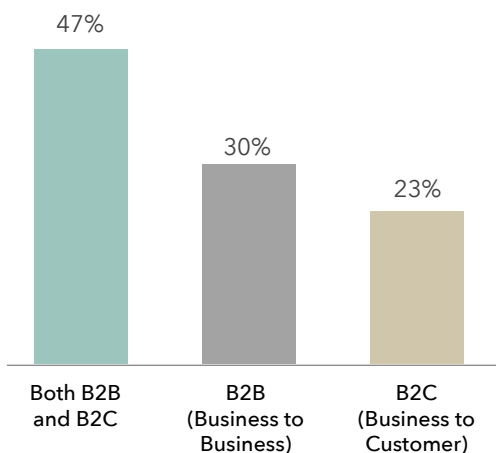
SURVEYPARTICIPANTS

BUSINESS VERTICALS AND TYPES

This, the inaugural *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: Corporate Edition* survey, benefited from broad participation from a wide range of businesses across industries — more than 80 brands in total. Reminiscent of past large-scale corporate surveying, standout verticals include Consumer Electronics/Tech/Software, Insurance/Financial Services, Health, and Retail which, together, form 54% of all survey participants. To put this in context, the previous large-scale corporate survey conducted by Execs In The Know saw these same exact categories combine for a total of 66%, indicating more diverse participation among verticals in this year's survey.

Verticals of Survey Participants

- 3% Food, Beverage, and Packaged Goods
- 3% Transportation and Logistics
- 2% Automotive
- 1% Broadcast and Media
- 5% Telecom and Utilities
- 5% Manufacturer
- 5% Education, Non-Profit, and Government Services
- 7% Real Estate, Home Services, Construction, and Design
- 8% Travel, Airlines, Hospitality, Restaurants, and Entertainment
- 9% Supplier, Business, and Professional Services
- 10% Retail, eCommerce
- 18% Consumer Electronics, Technology, and Software
- 14% Insurance and Financial Services
- 10% Healthcare, Pharma, Health and Beauty

Business Type of Survey Participants

- 47% Both B2B and B2C
- 30% B2B (Business to Business)
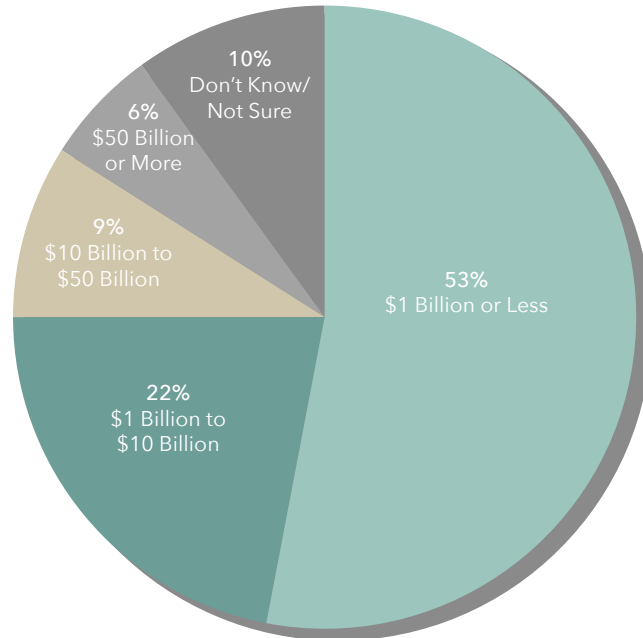- 23% B2C (Business to Customer)

As might be expected, the bulk of brands participating in the survey (47%) offer products and services to both consumers and businesses. A little more than half of participants were exclusive to either B2B or B2C. Among B2B companies (30% of the total survey participants), there was heavy representation from Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Technology.
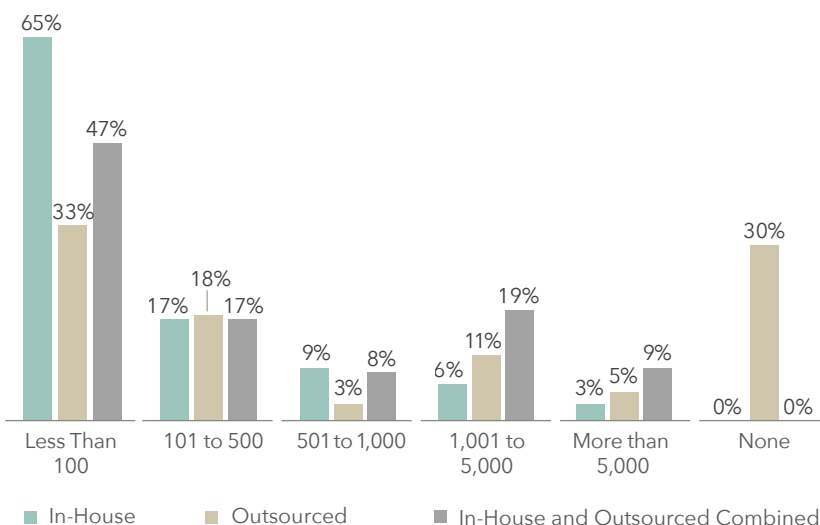
REVENUE AND PROGRAM SIZE

About half of survey respondents indicated that their companies brought in annual revenues of $1 billion or less, while another 37% of respondents indicated their companies achieve an annual revenue of $1 billion or more range. These results help paint a picture of the size of brands (and scope of CX operations) reflected in the proceeding data sets.

Revenues of Survey Participants

- 53% $1 Billion or Less
- 22% $1 Billion to $10 Billion
- 9% $10 Billion to $50 Billion
- 6% $50 Billion or More
- 10% Don't Know/ Not Sure

Approximately how many FTEs are a part of your contact center operations?

	Less Than 100	101 to 500	501 to 1,000	1,001 to 5,000	More than 5,000	None
In-House	65%	17%	9%	6%	3%	0%
Outsourced	33%	18%	3%	11%	5%	30%
In-House and Outsourced Combined	47%	17%	8%	19%	9%	0%

In a question that further illustrates the survey cohort, over half of participating brands (64%) have combined CX teams of 500 or fewer Full-Time Employees (FTEs). At the other end of the spectrum, slightly more than one-fourth of survey respondents (28%) have teams of 1,000+ FTEs. Furthermore, 30% of survey respondents indicated they had no outsourced resources as a part of their contact center operations, with 73% of these having <100 In-House FTEs.

BUSINESS HEALTH

Based on the results of a question aimed at the "state of the business," economic conditions appear to be very strong in 2021, with 87% indicating some level of growth. At the same time, only 2% of all respondents shared that their business was in any sort of decline. This bodes well for an economic climate that has been, at times, worrisome in 2021. It could also be an indication that brands staffed with CX leaders interested enough in sitting for an extensive CX-related survey are, for the most part, thriving in challenging conditions, highlighting the business value of focusing on the customer.

How would you generally describe the state of the business over the past 12 months?

- 2% Shrinking Moderately
- 0% Shrinking Quickly
- 11% Staying About the Same
- 45% Growing Quickly
- 42% Growing Moderately
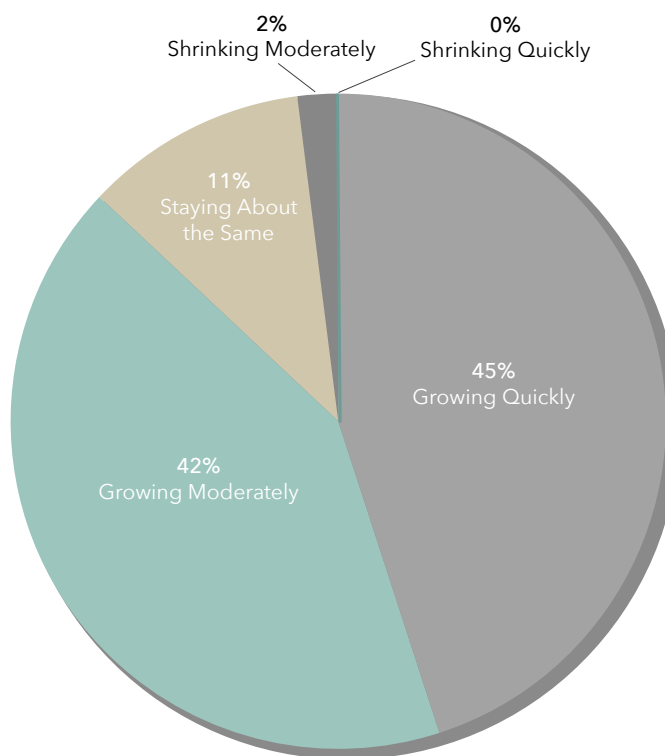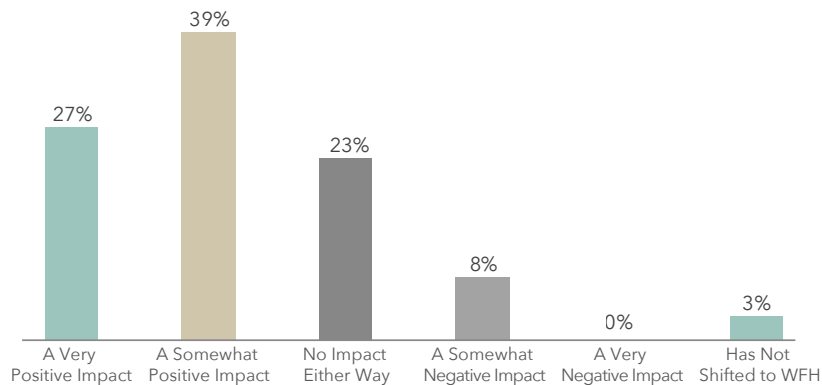
SURVEYRESULTS

WORKFORCE AND OUTSOURCING

WORK-FROM-HOME

IMPACT OF COVID-19

OUTSOURCING

WORK-FROM-HOME — WFH IMPACT

Generally speaking, what impact has your organization's shift to work-from-home (WFH) had on your ability to meet the needs and expectations of your customers?

A Very Positive Impact	A Somewhat Positive Impact	No Impact Either Way	A Somewhat Negative Impact	A Very Negative Impact	Has Not Shifted to WFH
27%	39%	23%	8%	0%	3%

THE WHY

Could employee satisfaction and higher productivity be at play? Research from PwC* shows 55% of workers want to WFH at least three days a week, even after COVID-19 is no longer a concern. The same research also suggests better outcomes in remote conditions for key activities, like collaboration, coaching, and building new relationships with customers.

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Emily Estes

Senior Director, Global Support Operations
Thumbtack

Q. What are some of the positive ways in which your operations have changed in the shift to WFH?

Thumbtack is a technology leader focused on empowering millions of homeowners across the United States to fix, maintain and improve their homes. Prior to the pandemic, our offices were focused in California and Utah with vendor partnerships in Manila. The culture of Thumbtack was office-centric and thrived on in-person interactions. The world has fundamentally changed for all of us, and this change allowed Thumbtack to rethink how we live and work across the organization. In 2021, Thumbtack established itself as a virtual-first employer. At that time, our Support team transitioned from a traditional vendor partnership and expanded our team as full-time employees. Since then, our Support presence in the Philippines has grown to 68% of the full team. Our virtual-first focus also allowed us the opportunity to hire across the United States, leading to a significant increase in diversity. For our Support organization, this increase in diversity meant our team members more accurately reflected the diversity of our user base. It also gave us the opportunity to establish a Spanish Language service team. The opportunity of being a virtual-first organization has led to a higher caliber of employees and a greater service experience for our pros.

*https://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/covid-19/us-remote-work-survey.html

WORK-FROM-HOME – WFH IMPACT AND PERFORMANCE

Nearly two years since the CX world has widely shifted to WFH, and the consensus is roundly positive. Sixty-six percent of survey respondents indicated the shift to WFH has had either a "Very Positive" or "Somewhat Positive" impact on their organization's ability to service their customer, while only 8% reported any type of negative impact. None of the survey's respondents indicated the shift to WFH resulted in a "Very Negative" impact on meeting customer needs and expectations.

Briefly describe why the work-from-home impact has been either positive or negative (as indicated in the question on the previous page):

POSITIVE

"We are more flexible with our employees, which leads to happier employees and better customer interactions."

"Better work life balance and lower than usual attrition."

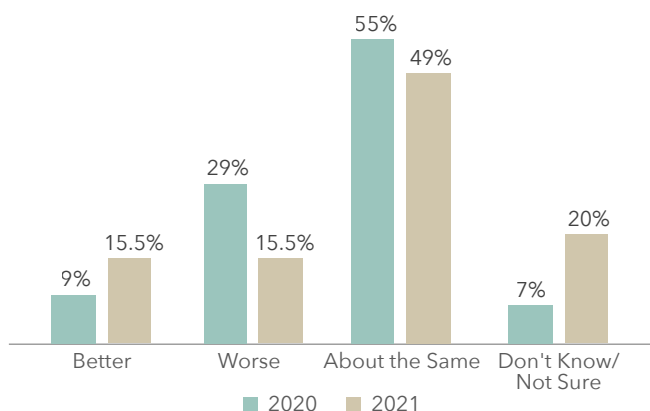"WFH is more attractive to potential candidates, and now we can source the best talent, no matter where they reside."

NEGATIVE

"BPO partners do not manage performance coaching and escalations as effectively as when the support was in the contact center."

"Higher than usual attrition has negatively impacted service levels and AHT."

"Less interaction means less opportunity for developing new strategies and tactics."

How do agents trained in a work-from-home environment perform against agents trained in-center?

Better: 9% (2020), 15.5% (2021)
Worse: 29% (2020), 15.5% (2021)
About the Same: 55% (2020), 49% (2021)
Don't Know/Not Sure: 7% (2020), 20% (2021)

■ 2020 ■ 2021

What a difference a year makes. According to 2021 results, the performance of agents trained in a WFH environment perform on par with agents trained in-center. The number of respondents who said performance was "Worse" nearly halved year-over-year, while responses of "Better" were also significantly higher. It's clear that many organizations have made whatever changes necessary to find success in training remote agents.
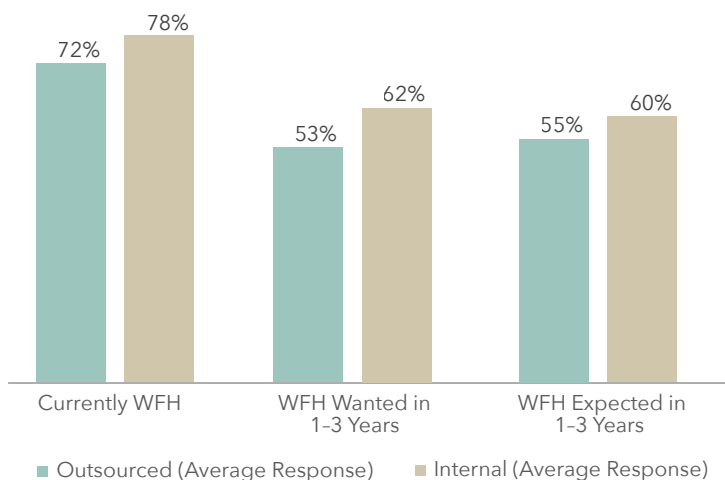
THE WHY

The year-over-year increase in the percentage of brands that don't measure or are otherwise unaware of how in-center-trained agents perform against agents trained remotely is striking. Brands should be aware of such differences, particularly as they develop new training programs and determine the optimum workspace scenario.
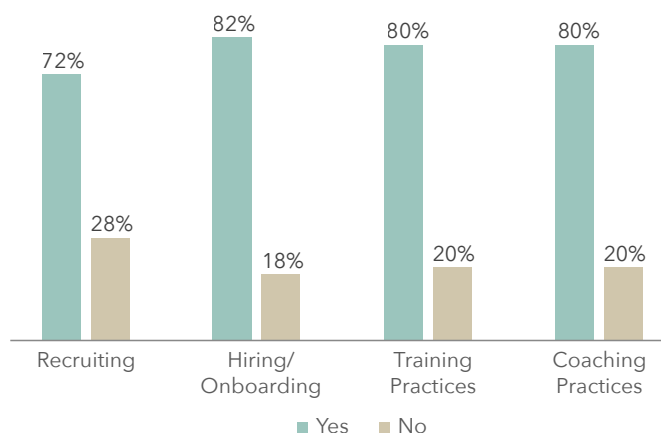
WORK-FROM-HOME – PLACEMENT AND WFH CHANGES

In a question that asks survey participants to look out into the future, it's clear that WFH is here to stay for much of the industry. Currently, the typical CX operation has about 72% of its outsourced workforce working from home, along with nearly 80% of internal workforce. These numbers are expected to fall within the next 1–3 years, but only moderately. Given the steady increase in performance of WFH employees, and the substantial advantages of WFH (like reduced overhead, improved employee satisfaction, and added recruiting flexibility), these expectations are most likely not set in stone.

What percentage of your outsourced/ internal workforce is currently work-from-home (WFH), and what percentage do you want/ expect to have WFH in 1–3 years?

Currently WFH: Outsourced 72%, Internal 78%
WFH Wanted in 1–3 Years: Outsourced 53%, Internal 62%
WFH Expected in 1–3 Years: Outsourced 55%, Internal 60%

■ Outsourced (Average Response)   ■ Internal (Average Response)

Have you adjusted your recruiting, hiring/ onboarding, training, and/or coaching practices as a result of the shift to work-from-home?

Recruiting: Yes 72%, No 28%
Hiring/Onboarding: Yes 82%, No 18%
Training Practices: Yes 80%, No 20%
Coaching Practices: Yes 80%, No 20%

■ Yes   ■ No

Changes in how brands recruit, hire, and prepare their workforce have been almost universal, especially accounting for the fact that about 20% of those survey respondents do not currently have WFH operations, which explains away almost all "No" responses.

Obviously, the most common change is in how brands interact with candidates and new hires using video and other virtual technologies versus face-to-face interactions. Other changes widely noted include non-location-specific recruiting, redesigned training courses, and a much more formalized and structured approach to coaching.

WORK-FROM-HOME – PLACEMENT AND WFH CHANGES

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND IMPACTFUL WAYS YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR RECRUITING, HIRING/ONBOARDING, TRAINING, AND COACHING PRACTICES IN RESPONSE TO THE SHIFT TO WORK-FROM-HOME?

A:

"Since the pivot to WFH, we've developed virtual, self-guided, on-demand training and coaching."

"To better support coaching, we have increased quality sampling; coaching sessions are now a scheduled event, whereas we had taken an 'as needed' approach in the past."

"We had to completely rebuild our in-person training materials so they could be delivered online."

"Our team now recruits across the lower 48 states, whereas in the past, we could only recruit near where our BPO site was located."

"We've implemented well-being check-ins, including 1-on-1s, team, and all-hands."

"We have incorporated an ambassador for each training class to walk new hires through what to expect. We also retooled our learning experience, which increased our training retention rates, transition to operations, performance results, and training survey results."

"We have made changes to our training, but also our post-graduation 'nesting' stage, which has increased engagement and retention."

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Julie Derybowski
Vice President, KAR Global Contact Center
KAR Global

Q. What are some of the workforce changes your organization has made that has led to a better employee and/or customer experience?

For employees working in customer service roles, a positive workforce culture is key to providing an exceptional customer experience. Happy and engaged employees are more motivated to serve customers with empathy and enthusiasm.

Recognizing career mobility as an important factor in promoting a positive workforce culture, we implemented a new and improved career ladder focused on our customer service teams. This career ladder gives our employees a playbook for how they can continue to grow within their own teams, as well as into customer service roles in other areas of the company.

Providing employees with a clearly defined short-term and long-term growth plan that is feasible to them helps stimulate motivation and security. Our customer service career ladder ensures operational continuity and a bench strength of industry knowledge on our customer service teams, while at the same time providing employees with a way to continue to progress in their career.

KAR GLOBAL

WORK-FROM-HOME – EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement has been a significant challenge for many organizations in their shift to work-from-home. Why is employee engagement so important? According to research from Gallup[†] released in October 2020, highly engaged organizations are 23% more profitable and boast higher levels of employee productivity and well-being, while also enjoying dramatically reduced levels of turnover and absenteeism.

Clearly, employee engagement is essential to success, and the shift to WFH has only served to highlight this fact. But, how is the CX industry managing to maintain high levels of engagement? Simply put – devoting more resources to connecting. This means having the right tools (Slack, Teams, Zoom, etc.), lots of dedication to the effort, and enough creativity to keep things fun and interesting. Being such a critical topic, an open-ended question was devoted to employee engagement. Here are some of the responses:

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR ORGANIZATION HELPS ENCOURAGE AND/OR MAINTAIN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FOR WORK-AT-HOME STAFF?

A:
"We have 'virtual coffee breaks' set up through Slack. We also hold in-person happy hour once a week for people who want to come into the office. We provide regular updates through email and monthly company meetings."

"We have implemented a well-being tool (Thrive), and we have also created an internal organization with roles to help drive and improve the employee experience and evolution of our company culture."

"We hold regular team meetings, have active Slack channels for both work and chit chat, and conduct weekly 1-on-1s across the team."

"We do daily end-of-day check-ins where we share our wins for the day."

"We try to create a lot of unique digital experiences, and also hold one-off get-togethers for those who are comfortable getting together in-person."

"We have many community virtual meetings, as well as quarterly off-sites. We've also been sending a lot of swag for offices spaces to help employees feel they are part of the team … stationary, mugs, mouse pads, etc."

"We have provided various 'safe spaces' to gain feedback and give feedback – including well-being surveys. We've also implemented simple things like gift card lunches, virtual shopping trips for office supplies, and have even let team members take their office chairs and other equipment home without the requirement of bringing it back if they should leave the company."

"We hold Zoom happy hours, provide giveaways by participating in games, do meal deliveries, celebrate birthdays, and have created many non-work social channels around hobbies and interests, including TV/movies, video games, books, gardening, etc."

[†]https://www.gallup.com/workplace/321725/gallup-q12-meta-analysis-report.aspx

# WORKFORCE AND OUTSOURCING

WORK-FROM-HOME

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OUTSOURCING

IMPACT OF COVID-19 – ONGOING CHALLENGES (OUTSOURCER)

Just as ongoing challenges persist for internal operations, so do they for external operations. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents said either "Significant Challenges" or "Some Challenges" persist within their outsourced operations due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. This compares to 71% for internal operations. At the same time, 14% of respondents indicated there were no persistent challenges occurring in their outsourced operations (compared to 6% for internal operations, as shown in the next chart).

Collectively, how would you describe the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations of your Outsourcing partner(s)?

Significant Challenges Persist	Some Challenges Persist	Almost No Challenges Persist	No Challenges Persist
7%	62%	17%	14%

Q:
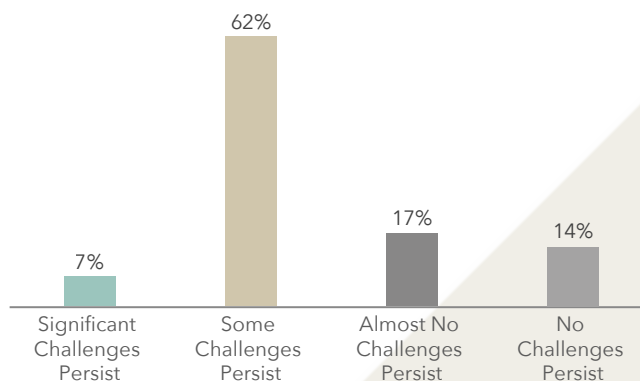
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE SOME OF THE PERSISTING CHALLENGES YOUR OUTSOURCING PARTNERS ARE EXPERIENCING OVER THE PAST 12–18 MONTHS, AND HOW THEY PLAN ON ADDRESSING THEM.

A:

"Our partner has not moved to a work-from-home model, so working through quarantines have been challenging at times."

"Our outsourcing partners sometimes lack the ability to demonstrate compliance against the practices, norms, and standards for the services they provided with WFH agents."

"Hiring has become more competitive, and the resulting action plans or pools of people are no longer as viable an option to staff. Simply increasing our spend is not as effective as it once was."

"Making the tech stack and security work consistently off-site has been up and down. Ensuring staffing compliance has proven challenging at times."

"There have been challenges in our team leaders' ability to create cohesive experiences for their agents. This cascades into doubts about their ability to share information accurately and quickly."

"Higher attrition and challenges recruiting, in Europe in particular. Finding multilingual CSRs has been difficult."

"Lack of in-person coaching and huddles, which also means no access to physical products to help with training and selling. It's also difficult to facilitate team meetings."

IMPACT OF COVID-19 — ONGOING CHALLENGES (INTERNAL)

A significant portion of survey respondents (94%) indicated ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, with 12% indicating that they continue to be plagued by "Significant Challenges." COVID-19 poses no (or almost no) persistent challenges for about one-third of survey respondents. Given the ongoing waves of new variants (including Delta, which peaked in September 2021 in the U.S., and Omicron, which has yet to peak as of late January 2022), this will be a data point worth noting through the remaining course of the pandemic.

How would you describe the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your internal CX operations?

Significant Challenges Persist	Some Challenges Persist	Almost No Challenges Persist	No Challenges Persist
12%	59%	23%	6%
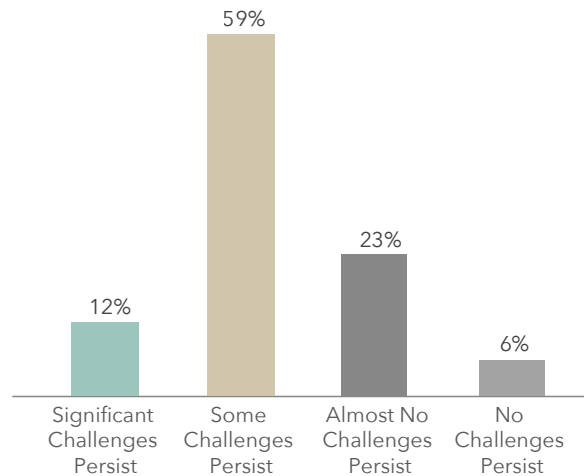
THE WHY

Recruitment, employee retention, and engagement are by far the three stickiest and most prevalent operational challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges dog not only internal operations, but business process outsourcing (BPO) partners, too, as seen on the following page.

Q: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE SOME OF THE PERSISTING CHALLENGES YOUR INTERNAL CX OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING OVER THE PAST 12–18 MONTHS, AND HOW YOU PLAN ON ADDRESSING THEM.

A:

"Tight labor conditions are making it difficult to staffing appropriately, often stretching our team thin."

"It is sometimes difficult for agents to get help when needed. We have increased staffing to help answer more agent questions, but the situation is still not ideal."

"We are challenged in determining the right work-from-home policies. We also continue to experience ongoing technology, training, and resourcing issues."

"Most of our ongoing challenges are related to maintaining and increasing employee engagement."

"We still see challenges with compliance to specific standards, and our ability to perform specific services involving personal identifiable information."

"We have been forced to take a more reactive approach versus proactively managing, having to address new customers' and employees' experiences and issues as they arise."

"Following safety protocols to ensure the health and safety of both our employees and customers – we've been challenged in keeping everyone healthy."
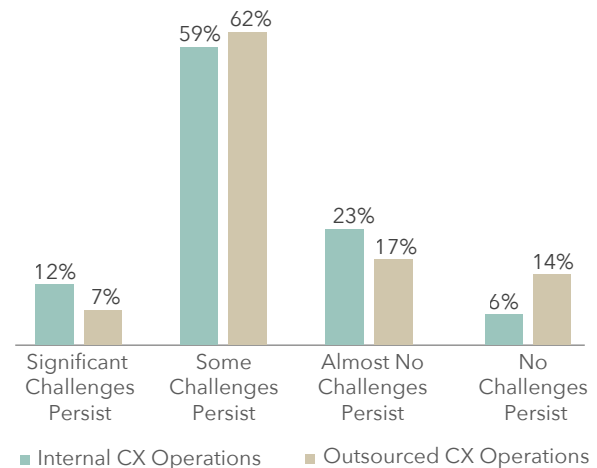
IMPACT OF COVID-19 – ONGOING CHALLENGES (COMBINED)

On balance, it appears that the ongoing pandemic poses more challenges to internal operations versus outsourced operations, but only by a thin margin. Survey respondents indicated "No Challenges Persist" by more than 2-to-1 for outsourced CX operations. Similarly, "Significant Challenges" are almost twice as prevalent in internal operations as they are in outsourced operations.

It should be noted that such results might be influenced by perception and access. As long as performance numbers are strong, clients might not be aware of the day-to-day challenges, whereas they have an intimate view of the ongoing challenges manifested within their own organizations. This includes things like absenteeism due to illness, recruiting woes, and the day-to-day challenges of living life during a global pandemic.

How would you describe the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on internal and/or outsourced CX operations?

	Significant Challenges Persist	Some Challenges Persist	Almost No Challenges Persist	No Challenges Persist
Internal CX Operations	12%	59%	23%	6%
Outsourced CX Operations	7%	62%	17%	14%

- Internal CX Operations
- Outsourced CX Operations

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Trish Wethman

Chief Customer Officer

Best Egg, a Marlette Holdings Company

best egg

Q. What were your organization's biggest wins in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

In the early days of the COVID pandemic, like so many people and companies, we were uncertain of the impacts that this unfolding global crisis would have for our employees and our customers. We acted swiftly with their health and safety in mind. Over the course of a few short days in March 2020, our entire workforce, including our front-line agents, moved to a fully remote scenario with no interruption in service for our customers. We offered a wide range of payment assistance options to those customers who were immediately impacted due to job loss or furlough, illness, or caring for family members. At the height of the pandemic, we invested in standing up an online customer community called "The Nest." Customers were invited to participate in weekly studies and polls to share how the pandemic was changing their expectations and behaviors as they apply to financial services. We were able to connect meaningfully in near-real time to understand their unmet needs and to help them build back financial confidence at a time when that seemed out of reach for many. Our customers have expressed repeatedly, through survey responses, chats and phone calls, how much these efforts meant to them while they were dealing with serious day-to-day challenges.
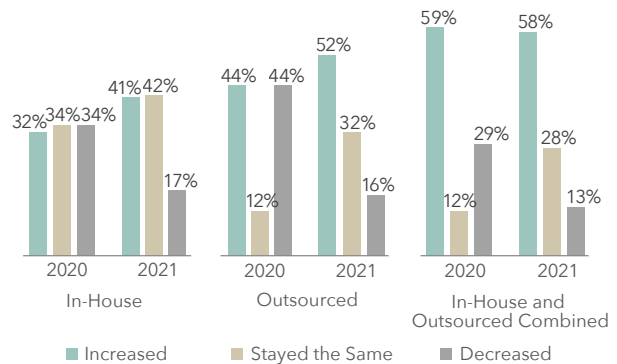
WORKFORCE AND OUTSOURCING

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OUTSOURCING – HEAD COUNT CHANGES

In terms of staffing up contact center operations, the pendulum has swung back in 2021. Compared to 2020, there was a 16-point reduction in the percentage of brands experiencing decreased levels of their total contact center workforce, with reduced levels of decreasing head count year-over-year in both "In-House" and "Outsourced" categories. Increases in "In-House" and "Outsourced" head counts were also stronger in 2021 than in 2020, although increases in the combined headcounts were roughly in line with 2020.

How has your contact center operations headcount changed over the past 12 months?

In-House
- 2020: Increased 32%, Stayed the Same 34%, Decreased 34%
- 2021: Increased 41%, Stayed the Same 42%, Decreased 17%

Outsourced
- 2020: Increased 44%, Stayed the Same 12%, Decreased 44%
- 2021: Increased 52%, Stayed the Same 32%, Decreased 16%

In-House and Outsourced Combined
- 2020: Increased 59%, Stayed the Same 12%, Decreased 29%
- 2021: Increased 58%, Stayed the Same 28%, Decreased 13%

Legend: ■ Increased ■ Stayed the Same ■ Decreased

THE WHY

Survey participants generally indicated that growth was strong, and we see this reflected in the head count growth (above). What's unclear is the impact on head count growth of two specific factors: labor market challenges and the increased use of unassisted and/or automated solutions. Growth was particularly strong among Outsourced teams, which may coincide with loosening travel restrictions, allowing more organizations to on-board new programs.

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Sheila Knight-Fields

Director of Guest Experiences

Evolve

Q. What sort of staffing shifts have taken place within your organization recently, and what have been the drivers?

Evolve's explosive growth drove the need for added head count within the Guest Experience organization. At the same time, attrition was high due to The Great Resignation, perceived lack of career progression, and increased seasonal volume, which left us understaffed to meet demand. This convergence of events directed us to think about how we needed to improve our teammate experience while maintaining our standards of service for our guests. This led to the realignment of prior functional "pillars" to instead focus on a clear career progression for our teammates while easing the guest experience.

In our post-implementation world, we now have a career path defined with clear roles, promotional paths, and additional skill opportunities that have helped to simplify our workflows and enhance our "Evolver's" experience.

The initial results have been outstanding. Not only are we simplifying our guest experience, we've started to achieve the results we targeted. Attrition for the period in 2021 before the realignment was 68.2%. For the period post-implementation, our attrition is 7% (three months in). As an added benefit, we no longer have to recruit externally for our higher-level positions, and our teammates have expressed their excitement with a clearer career path.

OUTSOURCING – PARTNER COUNT AND PAY MODELS

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (89% if discounting responses of "None") work with five or fewer outsourcing partners, with 11% working with six plus. Among these relationships, a "Per Minute/Per Hour" remains the most common pay structure. Year-over-year, outsourcing pay models remained most unchanged, with two exceptions: both "Per Full-Time Employee" and "Risk/Reward Basis" saw similar pullbacks of roughly one-third, likely an expression of a tight labor market and a stronger shift to an on-demand workforce.

How many different outsourcing partners are you currently utilizing? (Please note: This question refers to partners, not locations.)

1	2 to 5	6 to 10	10 or More	None
20%	44%	1%	7%	28%
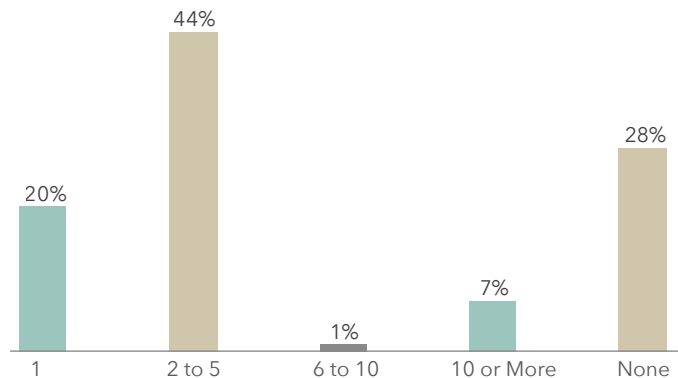
THE WHY

It remains to be seen how much of an impact pandemic-related travel restrictions have had on the ability of brands to take on new outsourcing partnerships versus expanding on existing programs. Undoubtedly, some brands have put outsourcing plans on hold, but many have found inventive ways to conduct things like site audits and virtual visits. As travel restrictions ease, the industry can expect to see expanding footprints.

What commercial model(s) do you use with your current Outsourcing partners? (Check all that apply.)

	Per Minute/Per Hour	Per Full-Time Employee	Per Contract/Per Interaction	Don't Know/Can't Disclose	Not working with any outsourcers currently
2018	48%	28%	36%	8%	4%
2019	44%	44%	7%	15%	15%
2020	49%	44%	25%	14%	11%
2021	50%	30%	24%	9%	19%
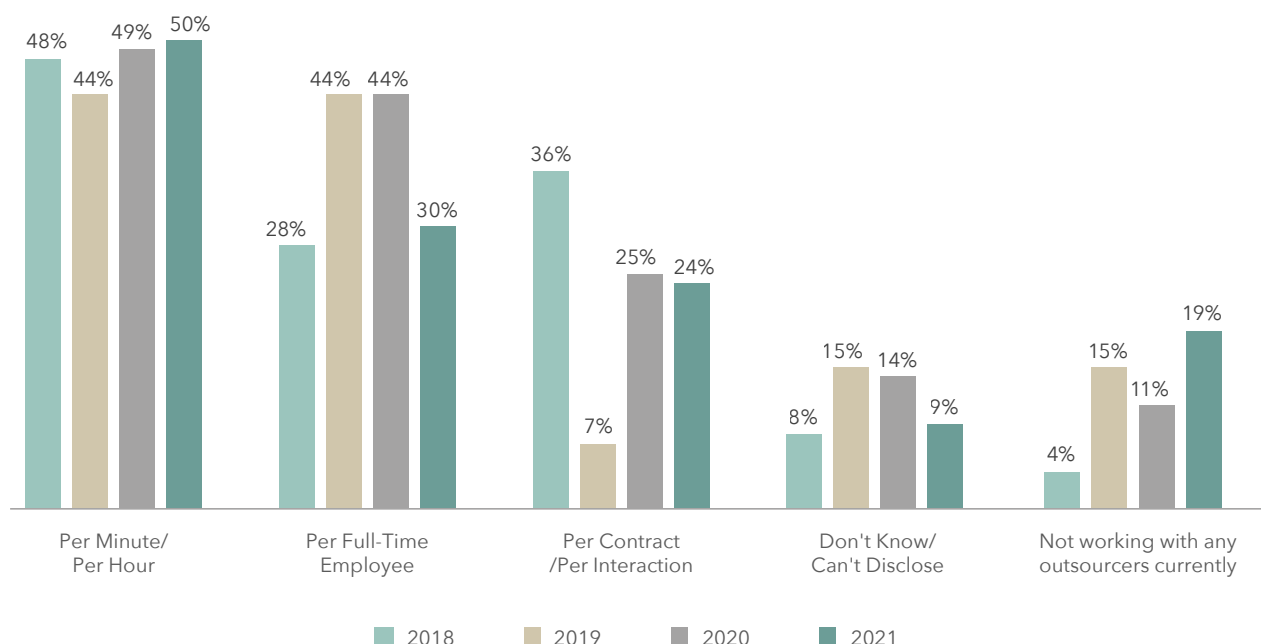
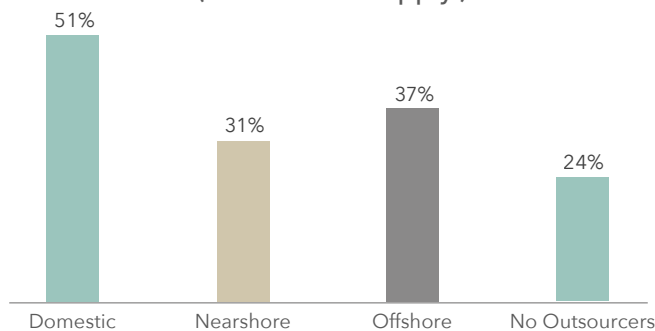# OUTSOURCING – GEOLOCATION AND FUTURE SHIFTS

Domestic and offshore were the two most common geos for outsourcer site locations, although the mix tended to be quite evenly distributed in general. The data showed expansion and shift plans were also evenly distributed among geos for those survey respondents who indicated an expected change in the future. Among those who indicated a pending shift, two factors dominated: cost and talent availability.

Cost was an especially common theme among those naming nearshore as a future destination, although several respondents also mentioned cost when pointing toward a shift to a larger domestic presence. In this context, cost was mentioned in terms of greater pricing flexibility due to lower overhead, mostly resulting from the shift to work-from-home and increased demand for part-time work, gig, and/or more flexible work arrangements.

How would you describe the geolocation(s) of the outsourcers you currently work with? (Select all that apply.)

Domestic	Nearshore	Offshore	No Outsourcers
51%	31%	37%	24%

To which geolocation(s) do you expect to shift more of your outsourced work in the future? (Select all that apply.)

Domestic	Nearshore	Offshore	No Expected Changes	Don't Know
24%	19%	19%	44%	13%
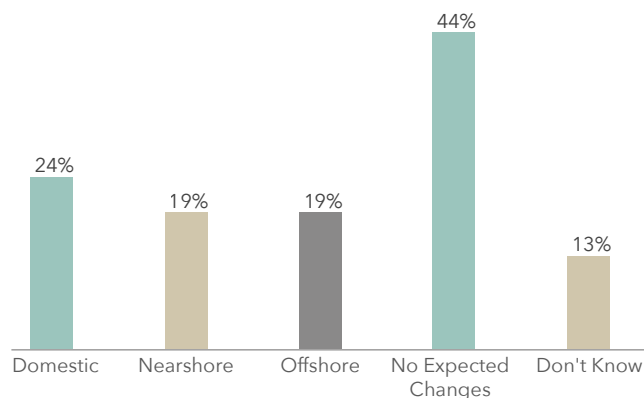
THE WHY

Uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic is still a major factor when it comes to deciding shifts in outsourcing partnerships. As more certainty builds, expect a flurry of activity at some point as brands adjust to the long-term changes that have taken place within their CX programs.

Q:

IF GEOLOCATION CHANGES ARE EXPECTED, WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY FACTORS DRIVING THE SHIFT IN LOCATION?

A:

"Stability of recruiting, talent pool availability, site access, safety of site visits, and quality of infrastructure."

"We like nearshore, as the costs are lower than in the U.S., but we're still able to easily visit sites."

"Currently, the offshore agents working from home are not performing as well as those that are domestic."
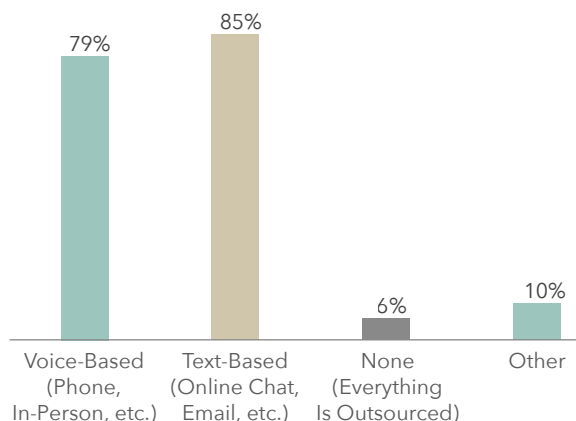
"More access to talent, willingness of some domestic labor to reduce salary expectations given the flexibility to work from home and enjoy a more flexible work schedule. "

"We consider these factors: cultural match, quality of work, operational practices, and price."
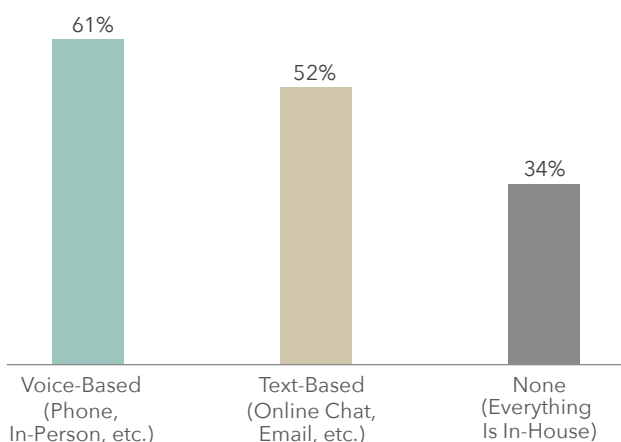
OUTSOURCING – HANDLING

Among survey participants, very few (6%) had outsourced all their customer care engagements. Furthermore, most respondents indicated their organizations were handling both voice- and text-based engagements in-house. Specific types of support called out in the "Other" category included Tier 3 support, back office, disputes, and post-sales follow-ups.

Which engagement type(s) do you currently handle in-house? (Select all that apply.)

Voice-Based (Phone, In-Person, etc.)	Text-Based (Online Chat, Email, etc.)	None (Everything Is Outsourced)	Other
79%	85%	6%	10%

Which engagement type(s) do you currently outsource? (Select all that apply.)

Voice-Based (Phone, In-Person, etc.)	Text-Based (Online Chat, Email, etc.)	None (Everything Is In-House)
61%	52%	34%

For outsourced engagements, survey respondents were more likely to farm out their voice-based versus their text-based workloads. When factoring out the respondents who indicated they handle everything in-house, coverage of voice-based engagements at outsourcers comes out to 92%, while coverage of text-based engagements comes out to 79%.

It may be the case that voice-based engagements are easier to outsource because they tend to be heavier in volume, meaning they may be transactional or more routine transactions. On the other hand, highly complicated issues (as well as those requiring a paper trail or delivery of a digital asset) are better suited for email or chat, and more complicated engagements tend to remain in-house.

OUTSOURCING – HANDLING, CONT.

Focusing on outsourced engagements, Domestic handling was more prevalent among both interaction types (Voice- and Text-Based), but more so among Voice-Based types. What this implies is that there is a higher likelihood that a Domestic center would provide more generalized handling. Conversely, this also implies that Nearshore and Offshore sites are more likely to be specialized, focusing on perhaps only one interaction type (Text-Based only, for instance). Also likely is the case that Nearshore and Offshore sites are more apt to specialize in an engagement type (i.e., sales, billing, etc.), whereas Domestic sites are more likely to provide broader coverage of all engagement types.

In which geolocation(s) do your outsourced agents handle Text-Based customer care interactions? (Please select all that apply.)

| Domestic	Nearshore	Offshore	Outsourcer(s) Not Handling Text	No Outsourcers
33%	29%	24%	11%	31%
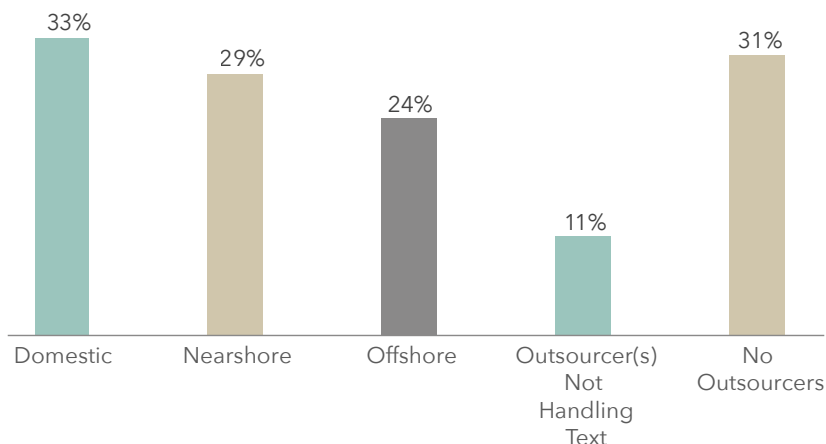
In which geolocation(s) do your outsourced agents handle Voice-Based customer care interactions? (Please select all that apply.)

Domestic	Nearshore	Offshore	Outsourcer(s) Not Handling Voice	No Outsourcers
46%	27%	27%	6%	30%
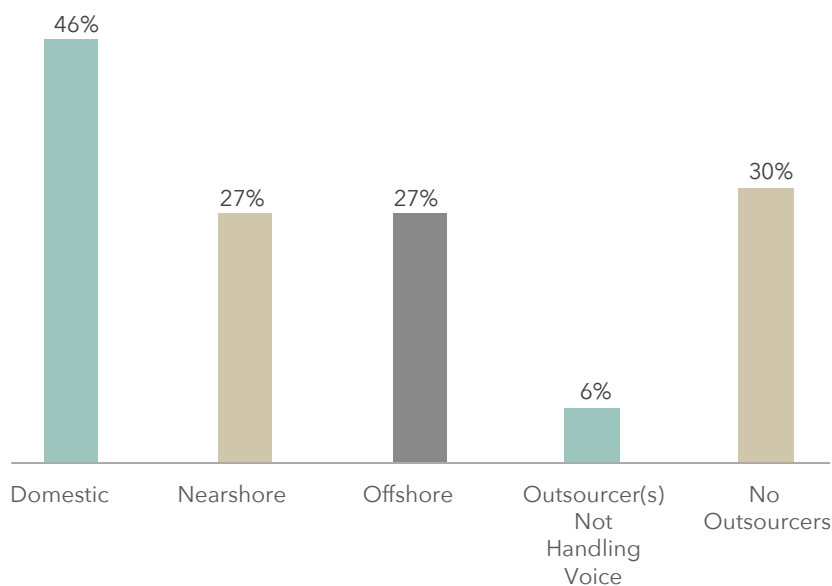
OUTSOURCING – SITE VISITS

When the COVID-19 pandemic first brought about significant travel and workplace restrictions in March of 2020, many organizations put their vendor management plans on hold. Site expansions, launches, and partner searches were all put on pause. But, two years on, BPOs have managed to put in place new tools for things like virtual site visits, program monitoring, and heighted communications. Many of these solutions work well, proving that while physical site visits will always have a place in the industry, innovative remote solutions can go a long way in enabling vendor management organizations (VMOs) to remain successful, regardless of the accessibility of travel.

Have you physically visited any of your outsourcing partner(s) or prospective outsourcing partner sites in the last 6-12 months?

- 84% No
- 16% Yes

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE
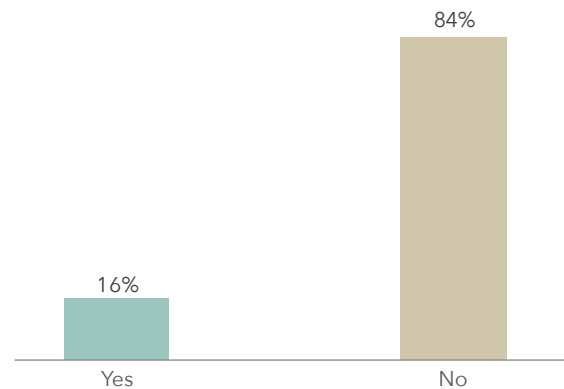
Francisco Toledo

Director, Global Vendor Management & Instructional Design

Groupon

GROUPON

Q. How is your organization managing things like site audits and program launches in our new virtual world?

The data shows something most organizations are quickly starting to realize: The need for a client's physical presence at an outsourced site has switched to the non-mission critical end of the operational excellence spectrum. But, this needn't equate to no presence at all. In fact, having an understanding of a site's ability to successfully navigate today's remote environment is critical for an effective footprint strategy.

In the past, site presence has meant a yearly or bi-yearly site audit performed by vendor managers or other individuals responsible for the BPO's performance and overall output. Luckily, today's technology provides unmatched options to replicate site visit activities, from conference calls to screen recording applications that can drive remote shadowings, replicating the effectiveness of face-to-face observations.

At Groupon, we made the decision of removing scheduled site audits through the year and, instead, integrate this activity into each vendor manager's weekly tasks. While the decision had potential risks around the VMO's bandwidth, the results were quite revealing. By quickly and repeatedly shifting focus from one area to another, vendor managers are able to more quickly identify and action improvement opportunities. This was particularly beneficial compared to previous efforts that involved yearly overhauls with action plans that required months to be executed.

OUTSOURCING – SATISFACTION AND AREAS OF FOCUS

Survey participants are, for the most part, satisfied with their outsourcing partnerships. But, worth noting is the year-over-year decline in total satisfaction, from 77% in 2020 to 67% in 2021. At the same time, Dissatisfaction ticked up four points. It may be the case that a lot was forgive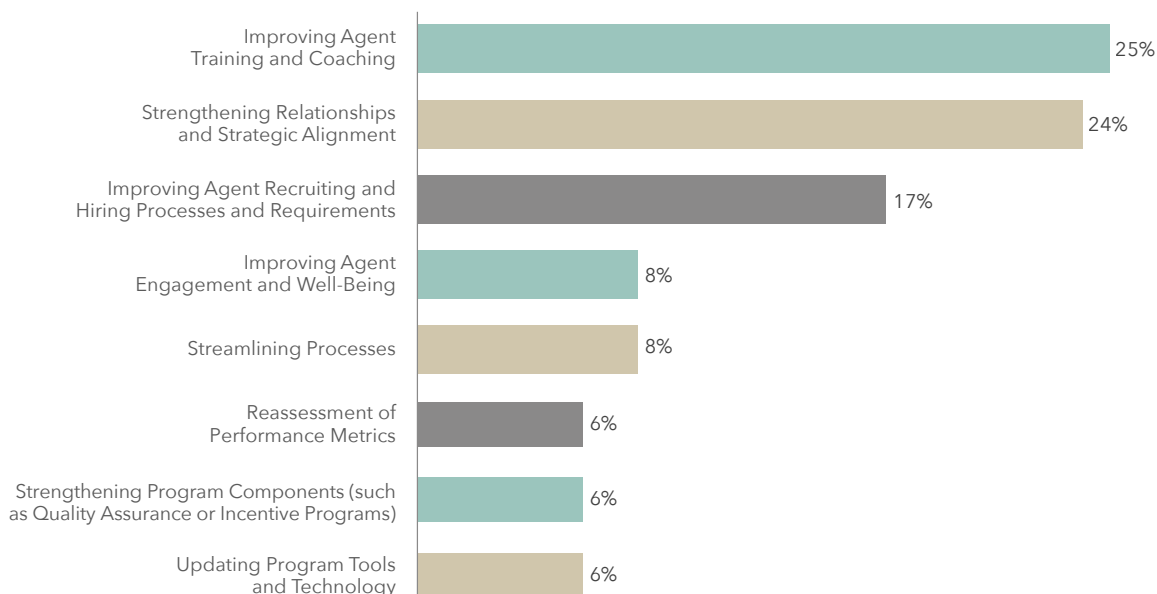n in 2020 because of the sudden onset of the COVID-19 crisis in March of 2020. But, as time goes on, and outsourcers are given more time to adjust, expectations are maturing.

In general, how satisfied are you with your current Outsourcing partners?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
2020	21%	56%	17%	4%	2%
2021	22%	45%	23%	8%	2%
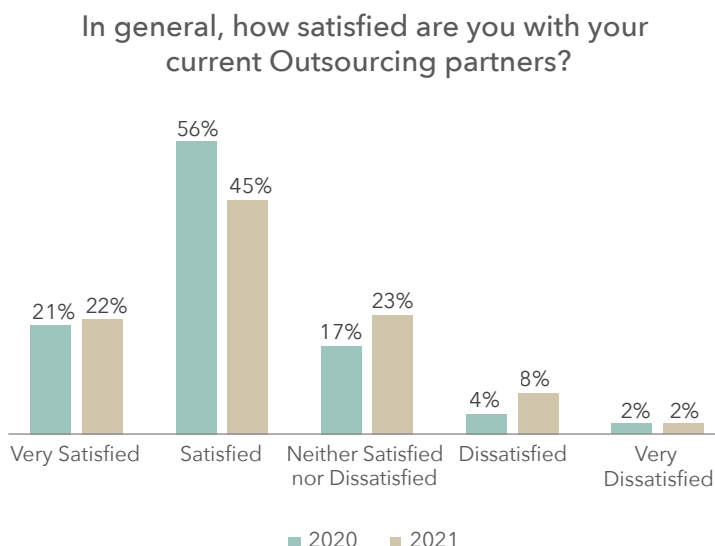
In looking for ways to get a solid return on improvement efforts, talent was a widely cited area of focus among this year's survey participants, as well as relationship building. This makes a lot of sense, given the workforce shifts and unique challenges of the past two years. But, as companies further stabilize and adjust to this new climate, hitting their operational baseline, it's expected that more focus and resources will shift from "getting up and running" to optimizing performance.

In your experience, focusing on which area of your Outsourcing partnership(s) tends to result in the greatest return on your efforts?

Area	%
Improving Agent Training and Coaching	25%
Strengthening Relationships and Strategic Alignment	24%
Improving Agent Recruiting and Hiring Processes and Requirements	17%
Improving Agent Engagement and Well-Being	8%
Streamlining Processes	8%
Reassessment of Performance Metrics	6%
Strengthening Program Components (such as Quality Assurance or Incentive Programs)	6%
Updating Program Tools and Technology	6%

OUTSOURCING – MEETING OR EXCEEDING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Interestingly, when survey participants were asked to identify areas where outsourcers are both exceeding and falling short regarding needs and expectations, there was a great deal of overlap between the two sets of responses. Thirty-four percent of respondents felt "Agent Quality and Performance" was an area of strength, while 32% percent felt the same an area of weakness. This means one of two things … either there is a big difference in the expectations among brands, or there is a big difference in the way different outsourcers are performing, be it by organization or program. Given this, brands and outsourcers should strive to rally around those things that most impact the customer experience.

Generally speaking, in which area is your current Outsourcing providers succeeding in best meeting or exceeding your needs and expectations? (Please select no more than 3 answers.)
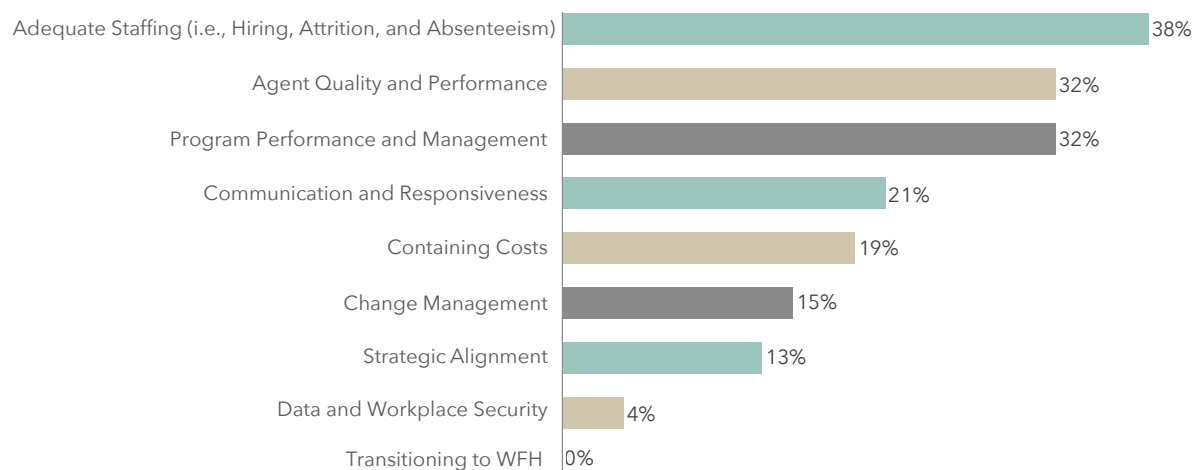
Area	Percentage
Agent Quality and Performance	34%
Containing Costs	34%
Adequate Staffing (i.e., Hiring, Attrition, and Absenteeism)	32%
Strategic Alignment	30%
Program Performance and Management	28%
Transitioning to Work-From-Home	21%
Communication and Responsiveness	19%
Change Management	13%
Data and Workplace Security	9%
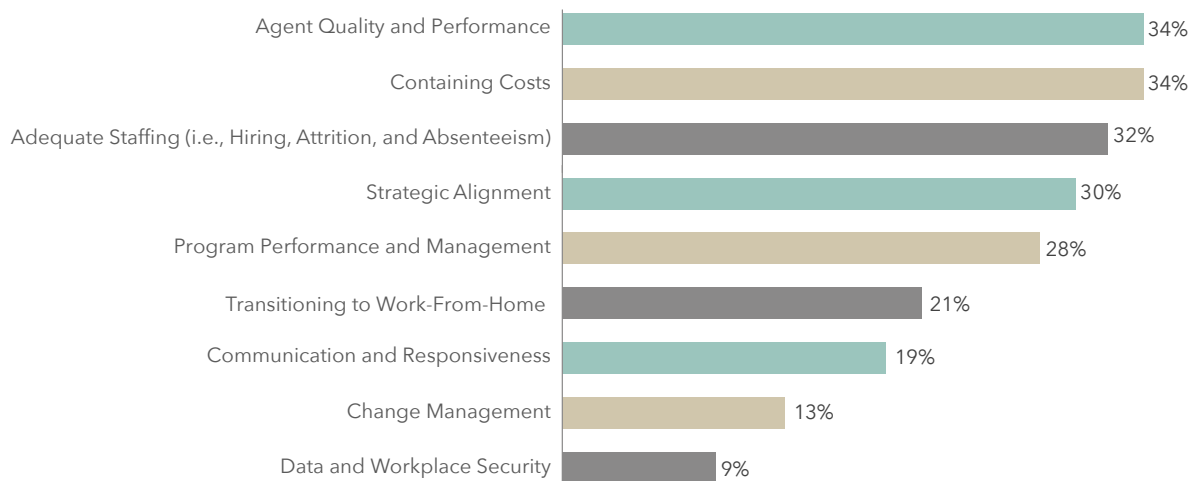
Generally speaking, in which area is your current Outsourcing providers failing in best meeting or exceeding your needs and expectations? (Please select no more than 3 answers.)

Area	Percentage
Adequate Staffing (i.e., Hiring, Attrition, and Absenteeism)	38%
Agent Quality and Performance	32%
Program Performance and Management	32%
Communication and Responsiveness	21%
Containing Costs	19%
Change Management	15%
Strategic Alignment	13%
Data and Workplace Security	4%
Transitioning to WFH	0%

OUTSOURCING – PAST PARTNER CHANGES

Without additional data, it's difficult to know to what extent the ongoing pandemic has impacted the occurrence of change within partner portfolios. Undoubtedly, some of this change (maybe most) is compulsory. For instance, a site is unable to expand due to a labor shortage and, of course, the shortage is caused by the health crisis. The results below provide some hints in this rega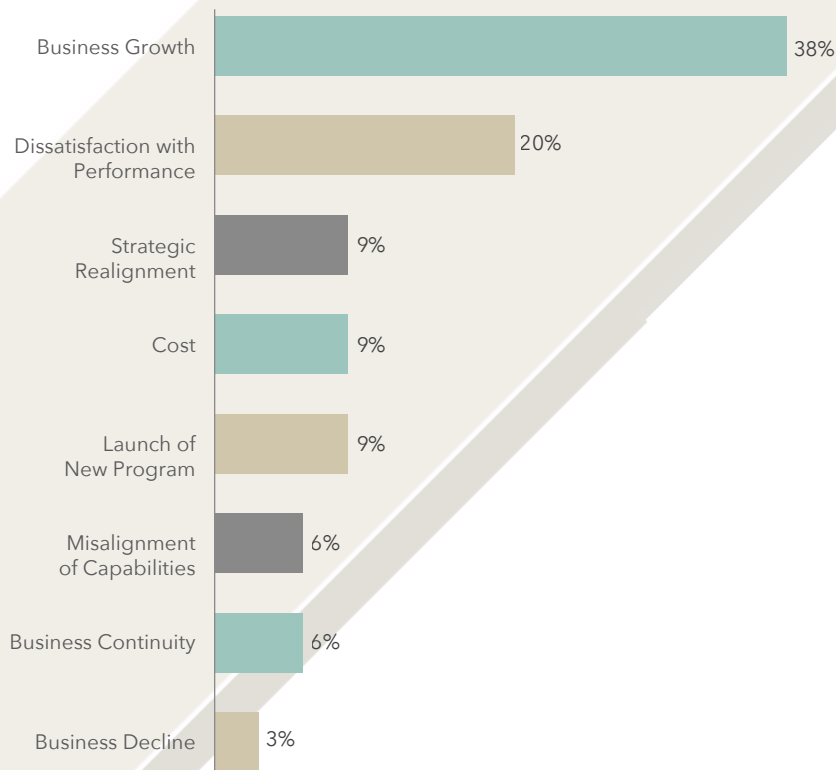rd, but, whether or not organic change is growing or shrinking, the events of the past two years serve to highlight the importance of adaptability. If non-compulsory change is on the rise, vendors would do well to focus not only on adaptability, but also innovation and customer centricity.

In the past 18 months, have you made any changes to your Outsourcing partner portfolio?

Yes 45%
No 55%
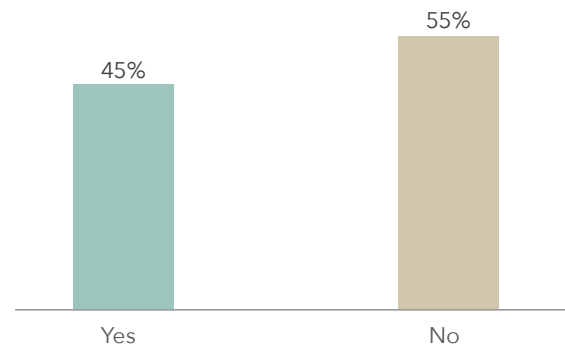
What was the primary factor driving the change that occurred?

- Business Growth — 38%
- Dissatisfaction with Performance — 20%
- Strategic Realignment — 9%
- Cost — 9%
- Launch of New Program — 9%
- Misalignment of Capabilities — 6%
- Business Continuity — 6%
- Business Decline — 3%

In another result that would be tremendously served by historical data, survey respondents pegged "Business Growth" as the primary factor in the changing partner portfolios of the industry. This is good news in many respects: It shows resilience in the economy, as well as strength among brands that focus on CX to the extent that they participate in surveys on the subject.

At the same time, service providers should take note that one in five vendor changes were propelled by dissatisfaction. For vendors that prioritize performance, this result should signal opportunity.

OUTSOURCING – FUTURE PARTNER CHANGES

Are you currently looking to make future changes to your Outsourcing partner portfolio?

- Yes — 20%
- Maybe/Depends — 30%
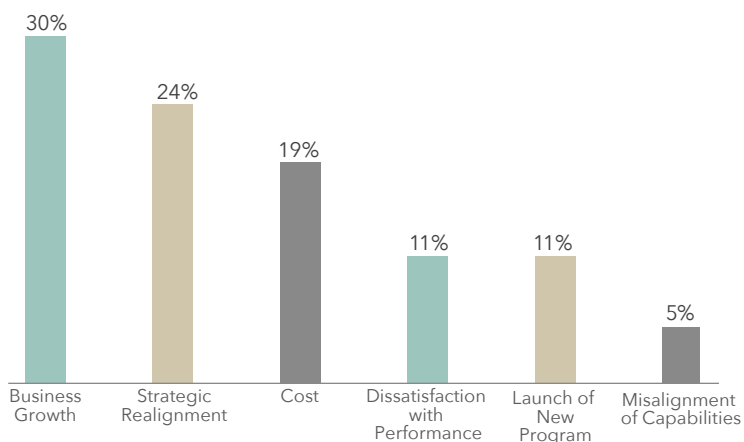- No — 34%
- Don't Know Not Sure — 16%
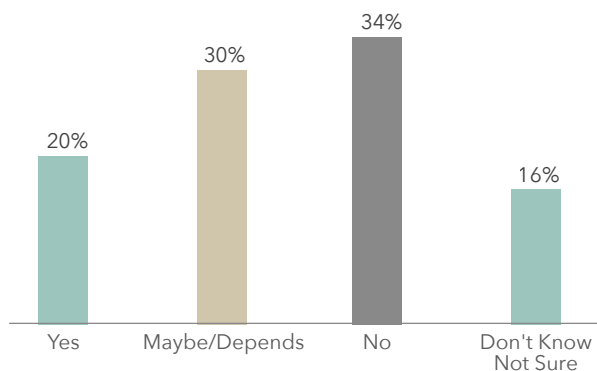
Much like the results discussed on the previous page, only so many conclusions can be drawn without data preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. But, what can be known is that, discounting answers of "Don't Know/Not Sure," only 25% of brands are looking to make an immediate or near-term changes. This appears to indicate a slowdown compared to the 45% that had made a change in the past 18 months (page 30), or perhaps "Maybe/Depends" folks have a very high rate of conversion.

Whether change is increasing or decreasing, the driver of recent and forthcoming change is consistent … Business Growth. It's also reassuring to see a nine-point delta between recent change (previous page) and future change when it comes to "Dissatisfaction with Performance." Also worth noting is that while the focus might be shifting away from performance, Strategic Alignment sees greater attention (up 15 points), as does Cost (up 10 points).

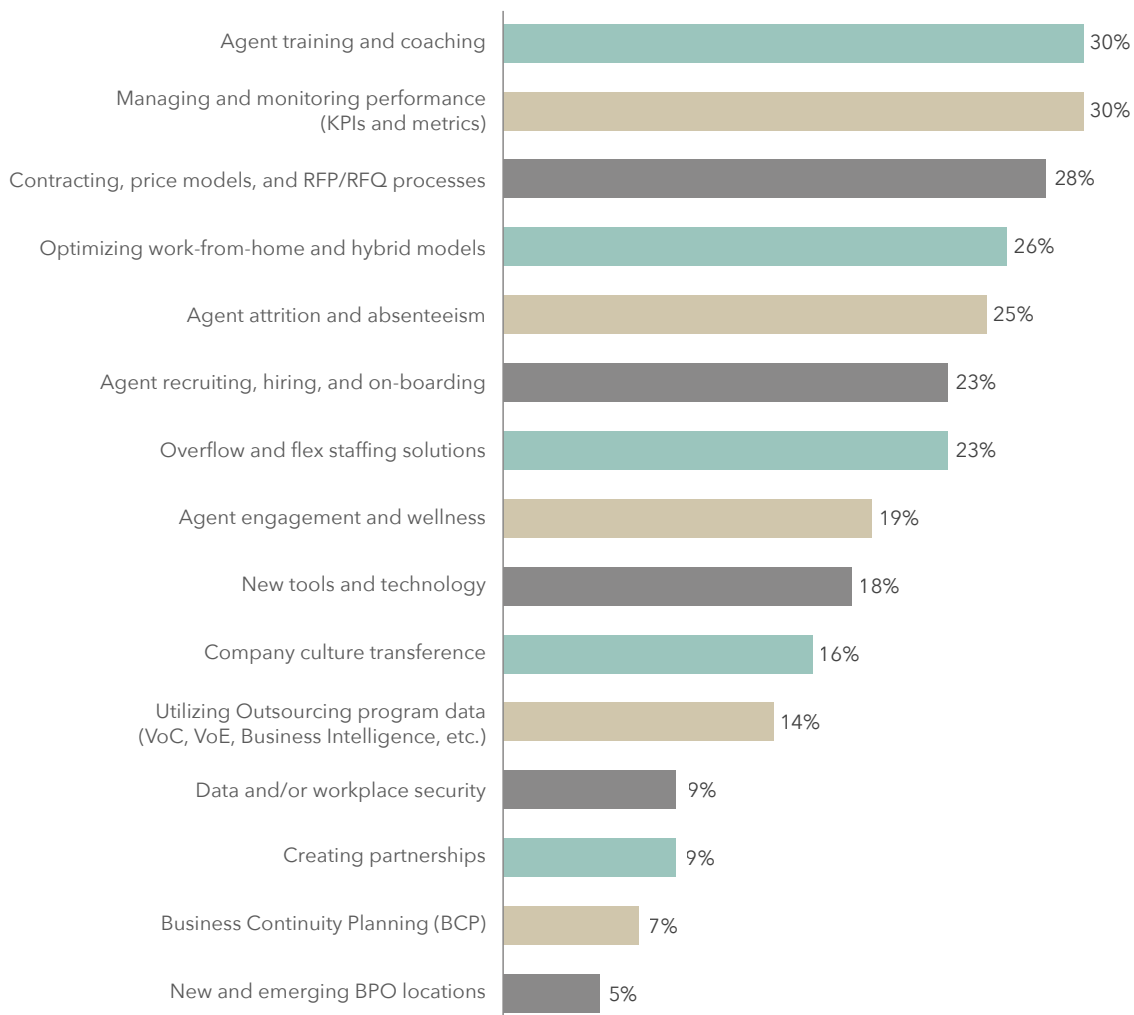### What is the primary factor driving this change or potential change?

- Business Growth — 30%
- Strategic Realignment — 24%
- Cost — 19%
- Dissatisfaction with Performance — 11%
- Launch of New Program — 11%
- Misalignment of Capabilities — 5%

OUTSOURCING — OPPORTUNE TOPICS

When it comes to outsourcing, the interests of CX leaders are remarkably broad. There was no concentration of interest in any single topic with less than a 10-point delta separating the top seven topics of interest. Among these topics, three themes emerge … staffing, performance optimization, and transactional aspects of vendor management (i.e., contracts, pricing models, etc.). The last of these aside, it's good to see that the focus is on those aspects (agent and program performance) that most impact the customer.

When it comes to Outsourcing, which topic needs more industry discussion and exposure? (Please pick no more than 3 answers.)

Topic	Percentage
Agent training and coaching	30%
Managing and monitoring performance (KPIs and metrics)	30%
Contracting, price models, and RFP/RFQ processes	28%
Optimizing work-from-home and hybrid models	26%
Agent attrition and absenteeism	25%
Agent recruiting, hiring, and on-boarding	23%
Overflow and flex staffing solutions	23%
Agent engagement and wellness	19%
New tools and technology	18%
Company culture transference	16%
Utilizing Outsourcing program data (VoC, VoE, Business Intelligence, etc.)	14%
Data and/or workplace security	9%
Creating partnerships	9%
Business Continuity Planning (BCP)	7%
New and emerging BPO locations	5%

KEY FINDINGS

- The shift to WFH has had "A Very Positive" or "Positive" impact on 66% of brands in their ability to meet the needs and expectations of customers (page 12)

- Only 16% of CX leaders thought agents trained remotely performed worse than those trained in-center, down from 29% in 2020 (page 13)

- Sixty-nine percent of CX leaders perceive ongoing, pandemic-related challenges among their outsourcing partners, while 71% see the same types of challenges ongoing internally (page 21)

- Forty-five percent of respondents have made a change to their outsourcing partner portfolio in the past 18 months, while 44% expect no geolocation shifts in the future (page 30 and 24)

The workforce is now a major focus for many CX leaders, and for good reason. The Great Resignation. Remote workspace challenges. Reconfiguring processes and policies. The list of considerations is immense, but this year's survey results provide lots of support for optimism.

The performance of remotely trained agents has seen rapid and significant improvement, and the overall sentiment regarding the shift to WFH is generally positive. Brands will need to continue to address ongoing concerns, of course, particularly as they apply to employee engagement and wellness. Brands should also take the time to reassess what they are measuring and how they are measuring it, ensuring KPIs are relevant to today's new normal and in full alignment with customer needs and expectations.

Brands should also be quick to embrace the advantages of this new normal. This includes things like providing flexible work schedules, expanding recruitment geographies, and using the opportunity to commit time and financial resources to much needed upgrades, particularly in areas like agent tool kits, training curriculum and materials, and technologies that support program efficiency.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

- **Are we optimizing productivity and performance for a flexible work environment?**

- **Are we investing enough in the technology needed to empower remote workers?**

- **Are we finding effective ways to measure, manage, and engage remotely, especially when it comes to cementing strategic alignment with outsourcing partners?**

PROGRAM STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

TOUCHPOINTS

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE

CX TECHNOLOGY

# CX DRIVERS & CUSTOMER LOYALTY — MEETING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

In a result that has remained mostly consistent since the question was first asked back in 2014 as a part of the CXMB Series, 84% of respondents in 2021 felt their brands were generally meeting needs and expectations. This result has trended up since 2019 (a low in the seven-year-long dataset), possibly due to the perceived changes in consumer expectations resulting from the onset of the pandemic. While true that some consumers may have been more forgiving of customer care challenges initially, this has likely given way to heightened expectations as brands retool and maximize work-from-home, hybrid, and other workplace changes.

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

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Yes	88%	76%	82%	84%
No	12%	24%	18%	16%
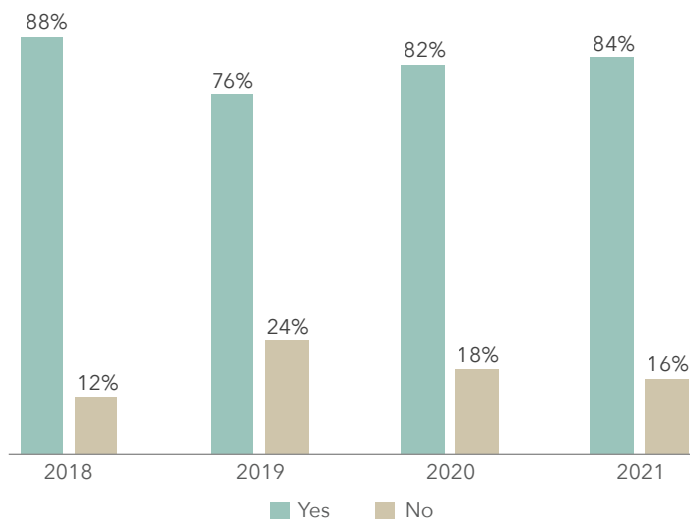
In a question that was also asked of consumers as a part of the *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: 2021 Consumer Edition* report (page 66), 99% of corporate respondents agreed that a brand's reputation greatly influenced consumers' purchase decisions. Interestingly enough, only 66% of consumers also agreed, while 14% disagreed, with 20% indicating neutrality. Clearly good customer service influences, but it is only one piece of the puzzle in the minds of consumers. Alongside exceptional care, consumers are also looking for quality, value, and a convenient shopping/purchase experience.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: A brand's reputation for good customer service greatly influences consumers' decisions to do business with said brand.

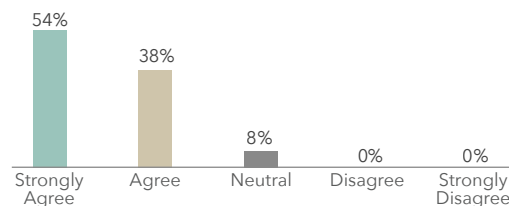| Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
58%	41%	1%	0%	0%
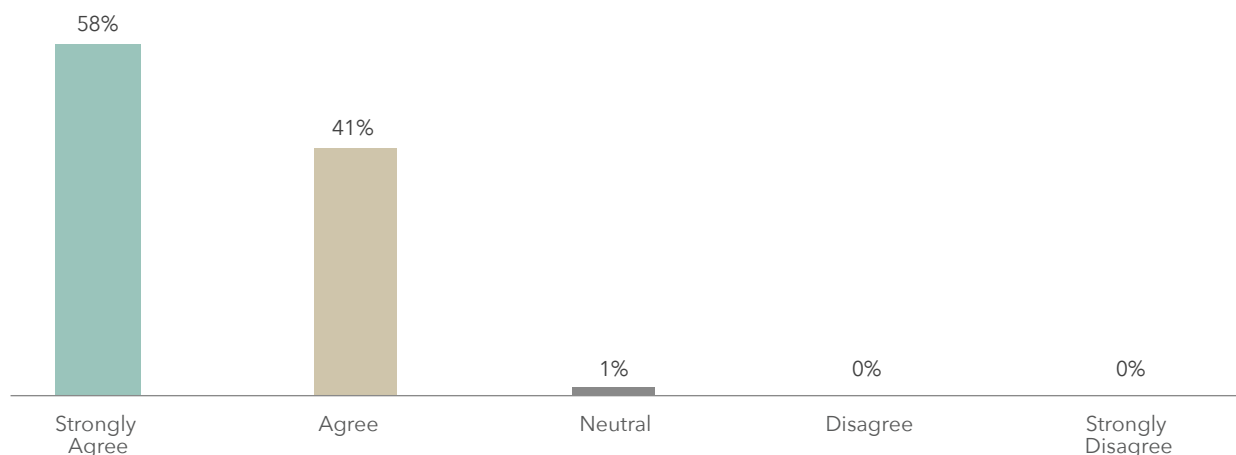
CX DRIVERS & CUSTOMER LOYALTY — DRIVING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Like the result on the previous page regarding service reputation and purchase intent, a large percentage of corporate survey respondents (92%) feel a good customer care experience results in brand loyalty. Again, consumers were asked this same question (page 67), and 75% of consumers agree. This should serve to strengthen the resolve of brands that invest in and support customer care operations as a core driver of customer loyalty and future revenue generation.

In a result that reveals perhaps one of the biggest opportunities for brands, only 42% of respondents feel CX operations are effectively translating to improved customer loyalty. The brands that make the most of maximizing their CX investments have integrated operations, with close working relationships between product, marketing, IT, and customer care — creating seamless and consistent experiences across the journey.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Receiving good customer care makes consumers very loyal customers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
54%	38%	8%	0%	0%

Do you feel your organization does a good job of using its customer experience operations to drive customer loyalty?

- No 8%
- Yes 42%
- Somewhat 50%

While the challenges of extracting maximum value from CX operations aren't entirely clear, it may be that some organizations are still struggling with internal silos and compartmentalization. Customer care is most effective in driving brand opinion when it is a part of a fully integrated brand experience.

THE WHY

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE
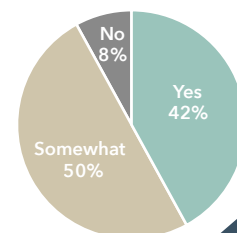
Jeff Lojko

Senior Vice President, Client Experience Transformation

Bank of America

BANK OF AMERICA

**Q. What are some of the ways companies can further boost loyalty through CX?**

It's exciting to see such great progress, with so many organizations feeling good about the use of their CX programs to drive loyalty! I think we've made great strides in understanding customer behavior and the emotional factors involved in creating loyalty. I see more and more organizations integrating operational data into their CX platforms to understand which clients are truly loyal, and then using various tools to understand causal patterns. I've seen some amazing usage of AI to identify actions that build emotional equity and brand loyalty, as well as some of the events that erode it. But, loyalty alone is not enough — for organizations to thrive, they must factor in engagement and profitability. Identifying customers who continue to deepen, promote, and advocate for the brand even after they've experienced an issue and then using tools like surveys and AI to understand what the real drivers are is critical to growing a loyal and profitable customer base. I think that's what many of the organizations that responded "Somewhat" in the above pie chart are striving to do right now!

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY — CUSTOMER FIRST COMMITMENT

A commitment to a "customer first" strategy can be one of the strongest indicators of a company's current and future success. But, getting there isn't always easy. A "customer first" strategy is, first and foremost, proactive, and it requires the resources and dedication of not just a single division or unit of an organization, but the organization in whole. When asked about their company's commitment to "customer first," 63% of survey respondents indicated full commitment, largely in line with 2020 results. This result is a promising continuation of the strong lift seen from 2019 to 2020.


Is your company fully committed to a "customer first" strategy?

Year	Yes	Somewhat	No
2018	58%	39%	3%
2019	45%	50%	5%
2020	66%	29%	5%
2021	63%	29%	8%
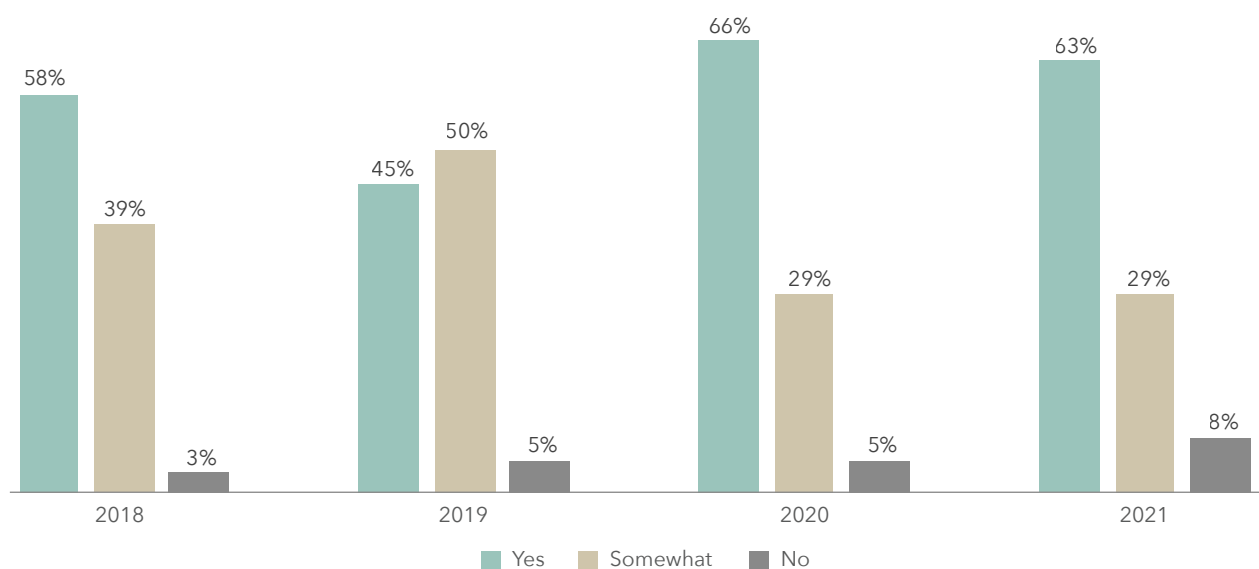
CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY — CUSTOMER FIRST CULTURE

As critical as a company's commitment to a "customer first" strategy is the presence of a company culture that nourishes a customer-centric approach. While 2021 results again mirror those of 2020, the delta of 10 points between the results below (culture) on the previous page (commitment) are telling. It demonstrates that, even if the commitment might be there, company culture is sometimes playing catch-up which is, perhaps, why the saying goes that "culture eats strategy for breakfast."

Do you believe the culture of your company is aligned with a "customer first" strategy?

Year	Yes	Somewhat	No
2018	45%	48%	7%
2019	30%	63%	7%
2020	52%	45%	3%
2021	53%	43%	4%
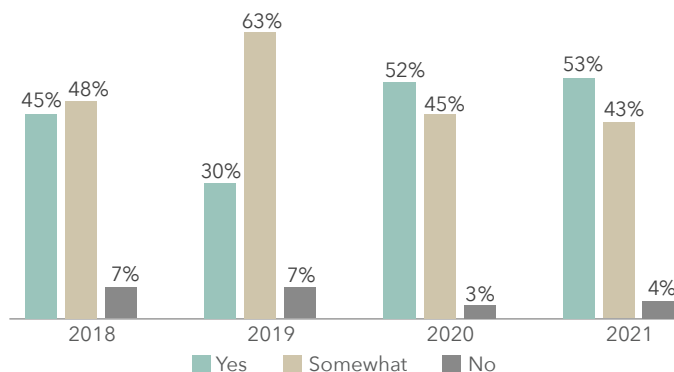
THE WHY

One of the hardest things for a company to do is change its culture. It's a living, breathing process that can't be sped up or resolved by throwing resources up against it. For a cultural change to truly take hold, it must run the length of the organization, from leadership to the frontline, from values to mission; it must be supported with wins, big and small, over time. But, if successful, a shift in company culture can reveal new possibilities for innovation, yielding achievements previously unreachable.

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Alix Bowman

Vice President of Global Customer

Optimere

Q. What are some must-haves in creating a company culture that prioritizes the customer?

Prioritizing the customer means including your customers in every business decision. This doesn't mean literally inviting them to every meeting. It means always asking the question, "How will this impact our customers?" before choosing a course of action. This isn't just for the C-suite, either — every employee in your organization needs to tie their actions to customer outcomes. How do you get there? Start with publishing customer feedback where everyone can see it. And, not just the curated praise, but all of it: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We do a live feed of both CSAT and NPS to public Slack channels. This makes it possible for anyone to ask questions about the feedback and for CX to post about the follow-up that was done. We also make sure goals for all teams are aligned to put the customer first. As an example, sales compensation has both new revenue and churn components, ensuring that they are motivated to set customers up for success from the start of the conversation. Product compensation incorporates CSAT, again to keep the focus on customer outcomes. These shared goals make sure all teams are putting the customer first.

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY – BIGGEST CHALLENGES

When survey respondents were asked to identify their biggest CX operations challenges, responses received covered a lot of ground, but fully one-third of responses were directly related to the Great Resignation or a similar staffing concern. Outside of these responses, there were also several concerns raised regarding the effectiveness of remote training, and challenges with agent behavior, engagement, wellness, and quality of work. Other commonly cited challenges included costs (financial resourcing), internal alignment, data utilization (gathering, managing, and actioning), logistics/supply constraints, and challenges in optimizing performance and processes within organizations reshaped by the pandemic. In general, the focus is on people first and foremost, followed by supporting elements, such as data usage, process, and other aspects key to unlocking greater productivity and performance.

Q: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE SINGLE BIGGEST CHALLENGE CURRENTLY FACING YOUR CX OPERATIONS.

A:

"Turnover and hiring, as well as acting on insights."

"Optimizing and streamlining processes and training to get best utilization of agents."

"Delivering frictionless service across multiple channels with a consistent brand experience."

"Consistently demonstrating the right behaviors/actions to create good experiences."

"We've had challenges getting our department aligned with policies, procedures, uptraining, etc., while at the same time busily hiring and onboarding to address rapid growth."

"Finding new talent as we continue to grow and scale."

"Lack of policy and technology ownership regarding decisions necessary to make our CX much better."

"Implementing tools to manage our hybrid (including work-from-home) model."

"The ability to scale and find a balance between self-service and agent-centered interactions."

"Costs – our internal team and outsourced partner costs have skyrocketed."

"Customer base does not want to self-serve."

"COVID-19's impact on changing consumer expectations for, well, everything. Consumers are less loyal, less patient, and complain more frequently … it's becoming more and more apparent that speed wins."
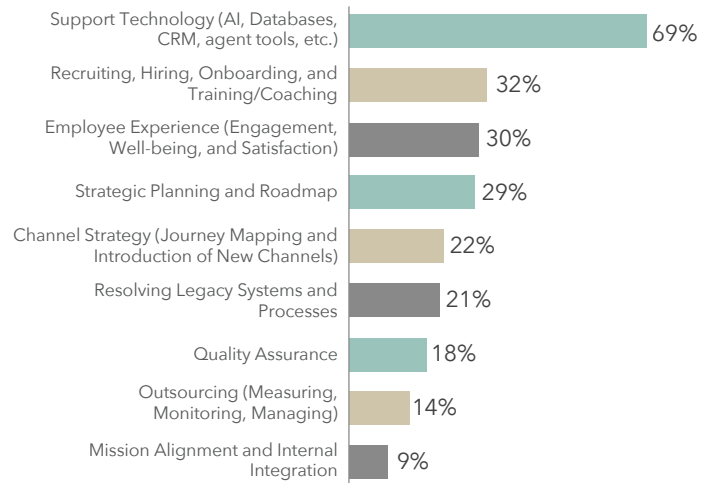
"Budget restrictions to provide additional support personnel. We are also dealing with outstanding tech issues which cause repetitive issues."

"Logistics … on-time deliveries are out of our control, which makes it difficult to provide a great experience."
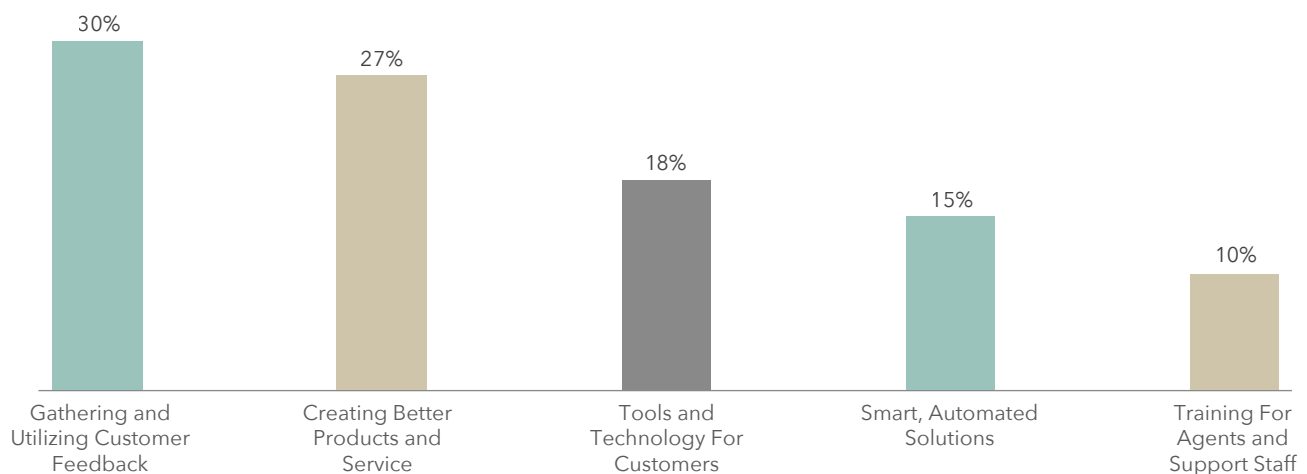
CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY — INVESTMENT

While 2020-2021 may have been dominated by acts of necessity, with much attention being diverted to the basics like continuing operations and keeping staff safe and well, it appears 2022 is squarely aimed at optimization, with technology investments leading the way. When survey respondents were asked to select up to three areas of focus in the coming 12 months, both in terms of investment and attention, Support Technology rose to the top, selected by nearly seven in 10 leaders. Employee-related options rounded out the top three, followed closely by strategic planning and roadmap development.

Which area(s) of your CX program do you expect to receive the most investment and attention from your company in the next 12 months? (Select no more than three answers.)

- Support Technology (AI, Databases, CRM, agent tools, etc.) — 69%
- Recruiting, Hiring, Onboarding, and Training/Coaching — 32%
- Employee Experience (Engagement, Well-being, and Satisfaction) — 30%
- Strategic Planning and Roadmap — 29%
- Channel Strategy (Journey Mapping and Introduction of New Channels) — 22%
- Resolving Legacy Systems and Processes — 21%
- Quality Assurance — 18%
- Outsourcing (Measuring, Monitoring, Managing) — 14%
- Mission Alignment and Internal Integration — 9%

In yet another question posed to both consumers and CX leaders alike (page 68), there was consistency at the top. Both consumers and CX leaders named "Customer Feedback" and "Better Products and Services" as top choices, although transposed. Forty-one percent of consumers named "Better Products and Services" as a top destination for investment in improving the customer experience, whereas only 27% of CX leaders thought this might be a top choice for consumers. So, while it's true that better products/service would likely alleviate issues, as long as issues do occur, brands would be well served to figure out how to gather and make best use of the data generated via customer engagement, including things like product insights and sentiment analysis.
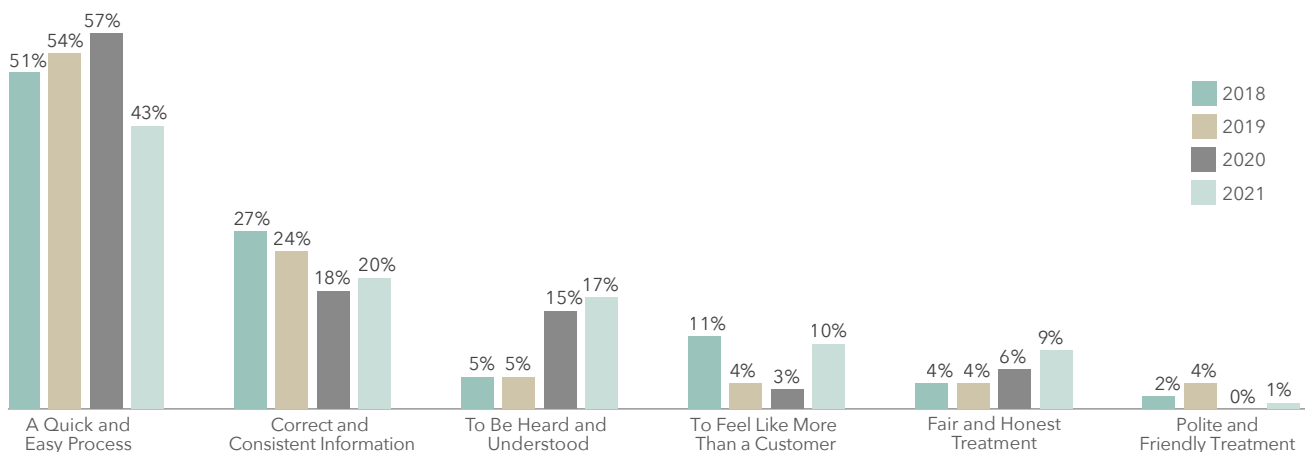
Where do you think consumers feel brands should be investing in order to most effectively improve the customer experience?

- Gathering and Utilizing Customer Feedback — 30%
- Creating Better Products and Service — 27%
- Tools and Technology For Customers — 18%
- Smart, Automated Solutions — 15%
- Training For Agents and Support Staff — 10%

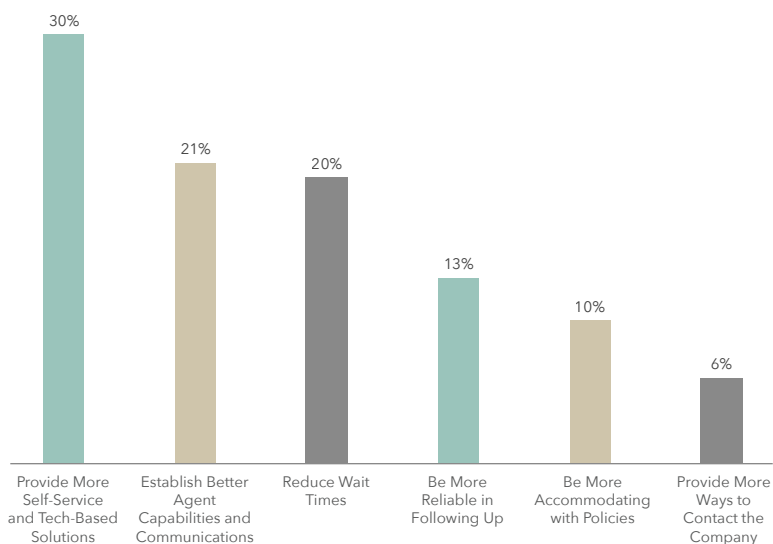# CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY — WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT AND CREATING EASE

In 2021, there was little change in how CX leaders perceive what's most important to consumers. Notable was the year-over-year 14-point drop-off in the percent of respondents who selected "A Quick and Easy Process." Luckily, this is another question with comparable consumer data (page 63), and those results continue to show that consumers value "Fair and Honest Treatment" above all else (selected by 29% of consumers in 2021). Considering consumers keep pointing to fair treatment year-after-year, companies should be constantly reviewing policies and monitoring their Voice of the Customer data for indications that customers might feel they are being unfairly treated. This is one of the many powerful ways brands can use their program data to proactively resolve issues.

Aside from getting their issues resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important to your customers when trying to resolve a customer-care issue?

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021
A Quick and Easy Process	51%	54%	57%	43%
Correct and Consistent Information	27%	24%	18%	20%
To Be Heard and Understood	5%	5%	15%	17%
To Feel Like More Than a Customer	11%	4%	3%	10%
Fair and Honest Treatment	4%	4%	6%	9%
Polite and Friendly Treatment	2%	4%	0%	1%

In one of the biggest disconnects between CX leadership perception and consumer reality (Page 64), 30% of corporate survey respondents think consumers want more self-service options. Among consumer responses, only 6% of consumers pointed to more self-service options. On the other hand, 26% of consumers indicated "Reduced Wait Times," followed by another 22% of consumers who pointed to "Better Agents." What is clear is consumers want speed and ease, and it might be the case that self-service solutions aren't perceived in such ways at this time.

What do you think consumers want brands to do to make the resolution process as easy as possible?

Category	Percentage
Provide More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions	30%
Establish Better Agent Capabilities and Communications	21%
Reduce Wait Times	20%
Be More Reliable in Following Up	13%
Be More Accommodating with Policies	10%
Provide More Ways to Contact the Company	6%

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY — FOCUSING EFFORTS AND SUCCESSFUL BRANDS

When it comes to where brands should be focusing their improvement efforts, CX leaders and consumers are well-aligned (page 68). In *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: 2021 Consumer Edition* results, 53% of consumers felt brands should be focusing on the Customer Care Experience, which aligns closely with the CX leaders' response of 63%. CX leaders also pegged the number two response, with 21% of consumers indicating the focus should be on the Ownership Experience.

Where do you think consumers feel brands should focus their improvement efforts?

63%	22%	9%	6%
The Customer Care Experience	The Ownership Experience	The Shopping Experience	The Purchase Experience
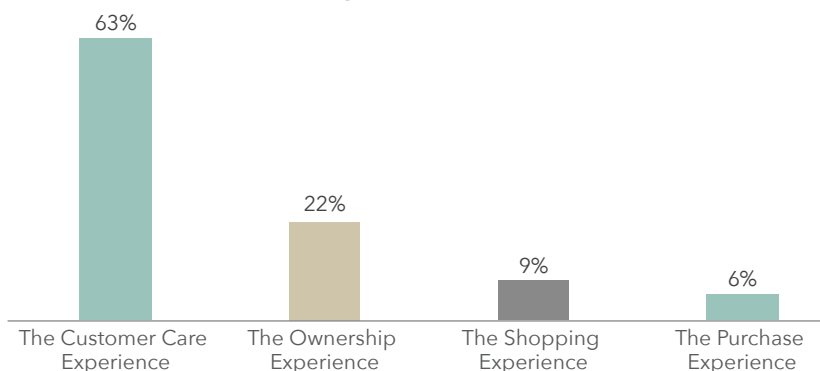
Q: WHICH COMPANIES DO YOU THINK ARE DOING CX REALLY WELL, AND WHAT, SPECIFICALLY, DO YOU THINK IT IS THAT MAKES THEM SUCCESSFUL? (BOTH BIG AND SMALL COMPANIES.)

A:

MULTIPLE MENTIONS:
Apple
Amazon
American Express
Zappos
USAA
Nordstrom
Warby Parker

SINGULAR MENTION:
Hilton
Chick-fil-A
Lands' End
Chewy.com
LL Bean
T-Mobile
Delta
Barkbox
Southwest
Disney
Ritz Carlton
AirBnB
Rogers

There's a lot to be learned from those brands that succeed at providing an exceptional customer experience, and the same names appear time and again. And not only do the same names appear over and over, but the attributes ascribed to those brands are also set to repeat. Words like, "quick," "easy," and "responsive" are often mentioned in describing the top vote-getter brands.

In addition to the words above, which describe an experience, two other themes emerged throughout the responses received: agent quality (and empowerment) and effective self-service solutions. Amazon was especially praised for its offering of tools and technologies that make it possible to resolve for a variety of issues without ever having to speak to someone. A couple respondents even associated this characteristic with "trusting the customer," an idea rarely encountered in the CX landscape.

PROGRAM STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY
TOUCHPOINTS
MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE
CX TECHNOLOGY

TOUCHPOINTS — CHANNEL PREFERENCES AND OFFERINGS

Although this question regarding an understanding of customers' channel preferences has been asked since 2017, this year's question introduced "Somewhat" as a new response option, adding greater granularity to the responses received. That said, the "No" responses, at seven percent, mark a historic low, indicating brands believe they are in a particularly strong position in understanding the channel preferences of consumers.

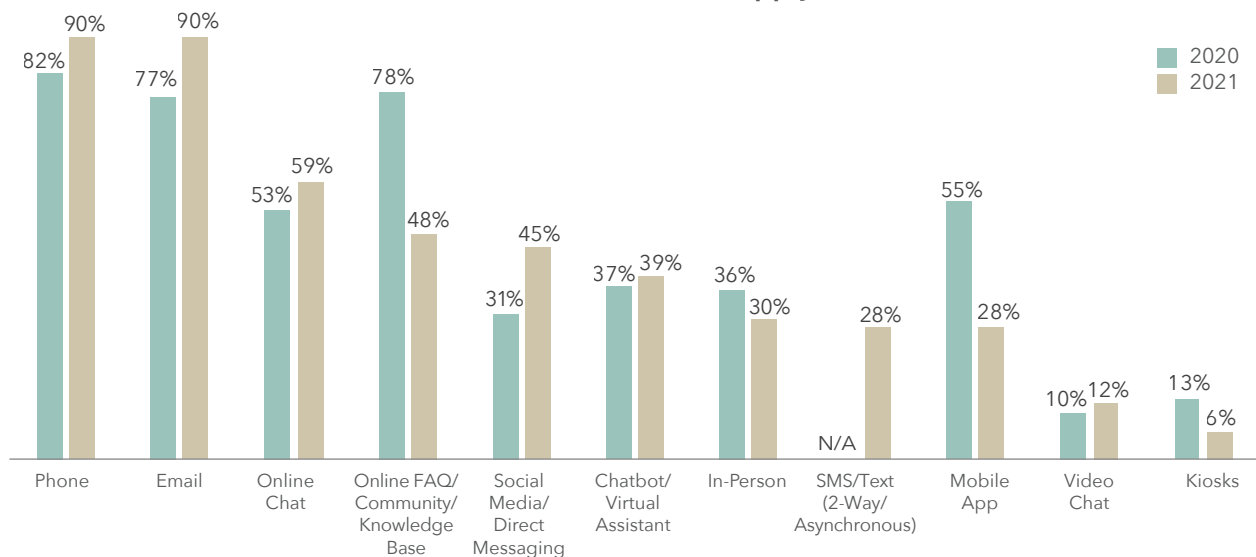**Do you believe your company has a good understanding of which channels your customers prefer to use?**

- No 7%
- Somewhat 38%
- Yes 55%
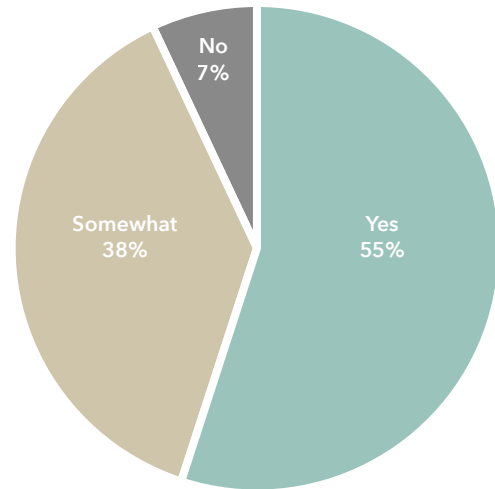
THE WHY
Compared to historic responses, CX leaders feel they are in a strong position for understanding consumer channel preferences. Increased focus on Voice of the Customer data is on the rise, and a likely driver for this confidence. A deeper understanding of consumer preferences, expectations, and pain points are just a few of the valuable insights that can be derived from mining customer insight data.

In a question aimed at identifying all the various channels offered by survey participants, a few interesting changes emerged. Both "Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base" and "Mobile App" saw significant declines, down 30 points each year-over-year. While some of this decline can likely be attributed to noise in the data, it's also possible brands are turning to AI-powered, interactive solutions. Also worth noting is the addition of SMS/Text as a new option in 2021. With a strong out-of-the-gate response of 28%, SMS/Text will be a channel worth watching in the years to come.

Which of the following customer care solutions do you offer for your customers? (Please select all that apply.)

Legend: 2020, 2021

Channel	2020	2021
Phone	82%	90%
Email	77%	90%
Online Chat	53%	59%
Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base	78%	48%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	31%	45%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	37%	39%
In-Person	36%	30%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	N/A	28%
Mobile App	55%	28%
Video Chat	10%	12%
Kiosks	13%	6%

TOUCHPOINTS – FUTURE CHANNEL OFFERINGS

Among solutions to be implemented in the very near future, SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous), Chatbot/Virtual Assistant, and Video Chat all topped the list, with the aforementioned SMS/Text leading the way at 57%. These results make sense, given that consumers time and again express a desire for greater ease and convenience in the customer care solutions they seek. SMS/Text (particularly asynchronous text) is all about convenience. At the same time, brands will need to take care that such solutions offer resolution rates that are comparable to more traditional solutions, like phone or online chat.

Which of the following solutions are not currently offered by your organization, but are a part of your short- to near-term plans? (Please select all that apply.)

Channel	Percentage
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	57%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	44%
Video Chat	43%
Kiosks	33%
Online Chat	30%
Mobile App	28%
Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base	26%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	25%
In-Person	18%
Phone	5%
Email	5%

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE
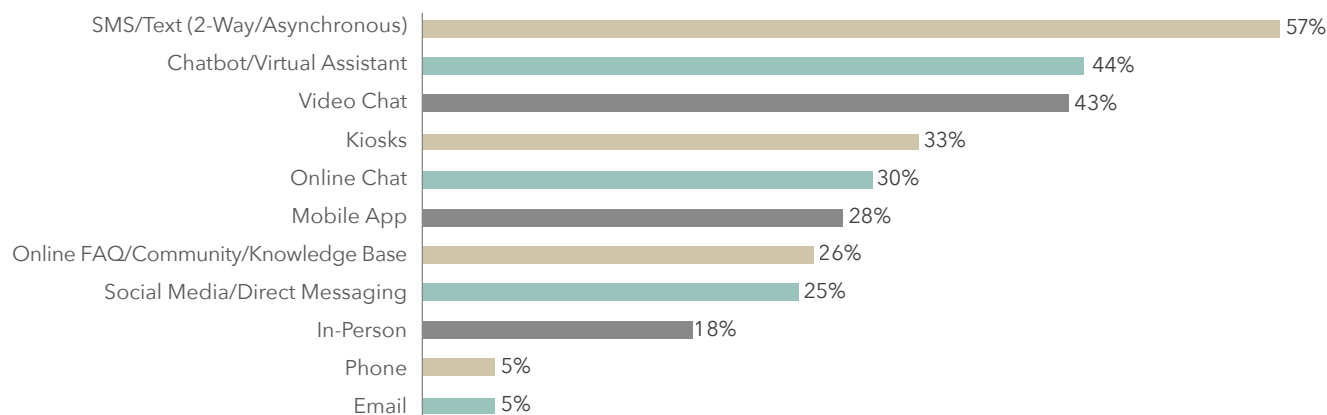
TraQuenna Branch

Associate Vice President

Memorial Hermann Health System

Q. Which new channels are being explored by your organization, and what are the objectives?

While we have realized tremendous results in the text segment, we are working to expand into new channels: SMS, Chatbot/Virtual Assistant, mobile app, and portal technologies. After all, our customers expect to interface with their healthcare provider just as they do within other service industries.

The time has passed where digital tools are considered unnecessary in the healthcare industry – Now, it is expected! Our challenge is to provide self-service interaction points that are simplified, meaningful, and easy. Our objectives for adding these touchpoints are to:
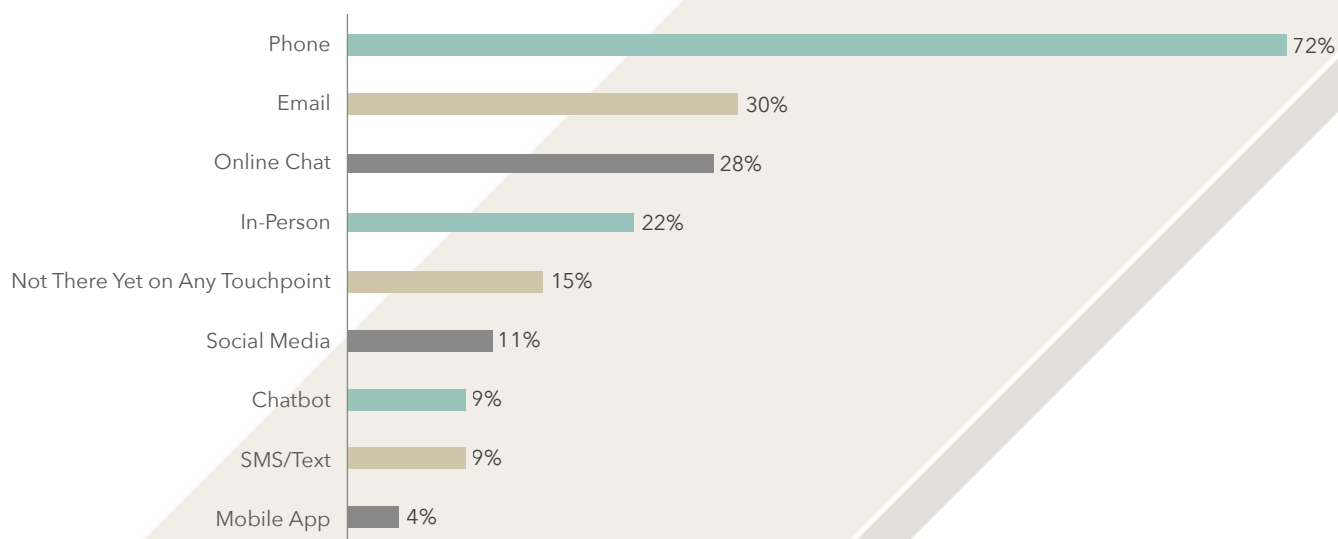
- Provide self-service options that are quick with minimal complexity
- Enable our customers to be serviced when and where they desire
- Leverage highly skilled team members to manage high-touch, complex interactions with patients that prefer the traditional phone method
- Control our cost structure as growth in specific business segments outpaces our reimbursement

If done correctly, our customers will reward us with brand loyalty and, in turn, we will be positioned to invest in new business ventures within our community.

MEMORIAL HERMANN

TOUCHPOINTS – SOLUTION SUCCESS

In a question structured around self-identifying touchpoint strengths, most respondents selected (perhaps not surprisingly) Phone. A tried-and-true solution, many of those selecting the channel pointed to the experience and training of agents, as well as the advantages of a one-to-one, real-time medium. Email and Online Chat were also highly rated because such solutions do well in handling more complex issues, even sometimes requiring the exchange of attachments. Interestingly, unassisted solutions (Chatbot and Mobile App) occupied two of the bottom three slots, highlighting the work that yet remains in these increasingly important solutions.

Which customer touchpoint(s) do you feel your organization excels at? (Select all that apply.)

Touchpoint	Percentage
Phone	72%
Email	30%
Online Chat	28%
In-Person	22%
Not There Yet on Any Touchpoint	15%
Social Media	11%
Chatbot	9%
SMS/Text	9%
Mobile App	4%

Q: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHY YOU FEEL YOUR ORGANIZATION EXCELS AT THE TOUCHPOINT(S) DENOTED IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

A:

"Within our voice solution, agents are well-trained, extensively measured, and execute well."

"Our in-person solutions allow for deeper personalization and service, whereas our voice channels are driven by effective issue resolution (more employee empowerment)."

"We are able to resolve issues quickly and efficiently via phone because the agents are well-trained in active listening and proactive support."
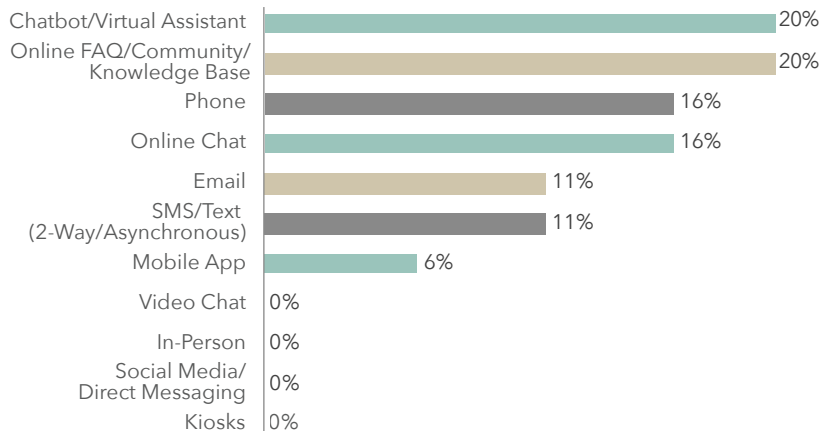
"We have done a very good job with our self-help experience – boasting a +6-point CES compared to all channels."

"We find service issues are resolved easier on the phone than through chat/email, and phone has a very low abandon rate."

"We view assisted solutions as an opportunity to build rapport and create loyal fans of the brand."
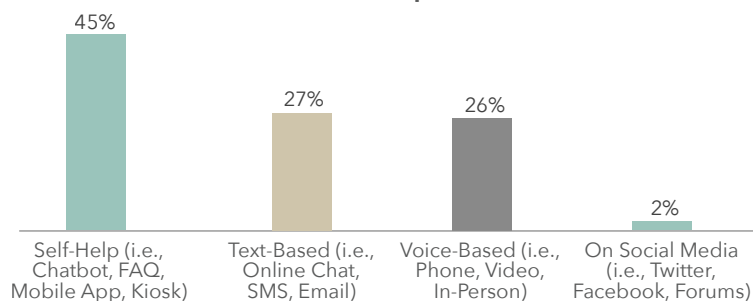
TOUCHPOINTS — PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

Assuming all solutions are equally capable of resolving a customer's issue, which channel would you prefer your customers use?

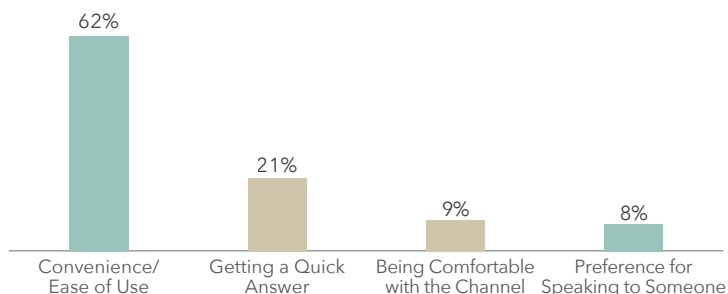| Channel	%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	20%
Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base	20%
Phone	16%
Online Chat	16%
Email	11%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	11%
Mobile App	6%
Video Chat	0%
In-Person	0%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	0%
Kiosks	0%

Owing, at least in part, to ongoing workforce challenges, it should be no surprise that CX leaders would prefer that customers seek out unassisted solutions in resolving their issues. This might make sense in a world where such solutions offer a high rate of resolution and CSAT scores to match, but consumer research suggests unassisted solutions aren't there yet. Brands will have to be hyper-aware of the experiences they are providing via unassisted solutions, particularly in regards to the impact on things like loyalty and brand satisfaction.

In a pair of questions with consumer equivalents (page 69 and 70), CX leaders continue with the historical trend of overestimating consumers' desire for self-help solutions, both in terms of preference and the factors determining those preferences. While 45% of corporate respondents thought consumers would prefer to use Self-Help to resolve their customer care issue, Self-Help was indicated by only 15% of consumers, while Text- and Voice-Based were split at about 40% each. At the same time, only 8% of CX leaders thought "Preference for Speaking to Someone" was a factor in determining contact preferences, although this factor was actually selected by 47% of consumers.

Assuming the customer care issue would be resolved, which contact method do you think consumers would prefer to use?

Contact Method	%
Self-Help (i.e., Chatbot, FAQ, Mobile App, Kiosk)	45%
Text-Based (i.e., Online Chat, SMS, Email)	27%
Voice-Based (i.e., Phone, Video, In-Person)	26%
On Social Media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Forums)	2%

What do you think is the biggest factor in determining the contact method preferences of consumers?

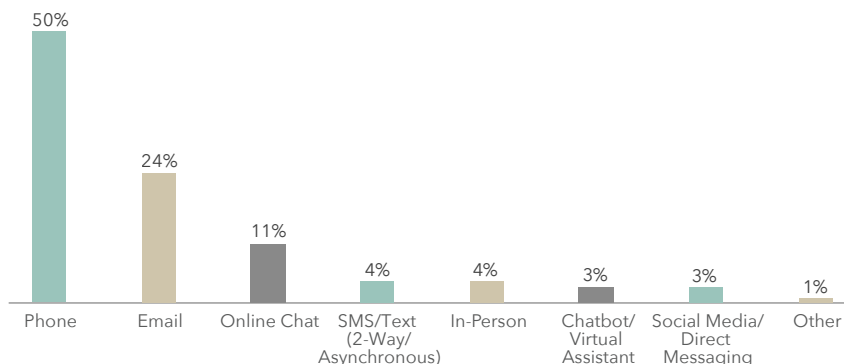| Factor	%
Convenience/Ease of Use	62%
Getting a Quick Answer	21%
Being Comfortable with the Channel	9%
Preference for Speaking to Someone	8%

THE WHY

Consumers continue to opt for assisted solutions (like Phone, Email, or Online Chat) over unassisted solutions, most likely due to previous, subpar experiences with unassisted solutions. In order to change this mindset, brands will need to ensure their unassisted solutions pack both a high resolution rate, as well as the speed and convenience consumers have come to expect from unassisted solutions.
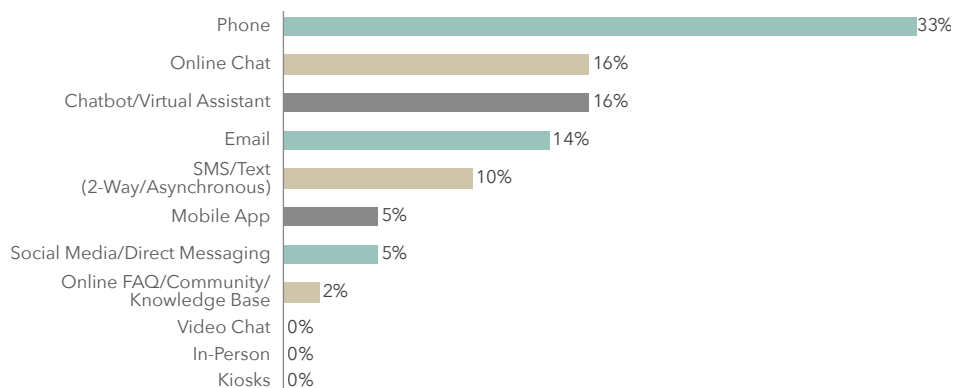
TOUCHPOINTS — VOLUME BY TOUCHPOINT

New for 2021, respondents were asked to provide a breakdown of their program volume by contact type. Responses were averaged together by solution to create an activity heatmap. Results show Traditional (i.e., Phone and Email) still form the bulk of engagements at most organizations. But, this dynamic may be headed for change with the rise of Online Chat, SMS/Text, and Chatbots/Virtual Assistants, each spurred on by the ongoing pandemic.

Please indicate what percentage each of the following solutions contributes to your program's Overall Contact Volume. (Average response by channel displayed.)

Channel	Percentage
Phone	50%
Email	24%
Online Chat	11%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	4%
In-Person	4%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	3%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	3%
Other	1%

Which of the following customer care solutions has seen the biggest increase in volume in the past 12 months?

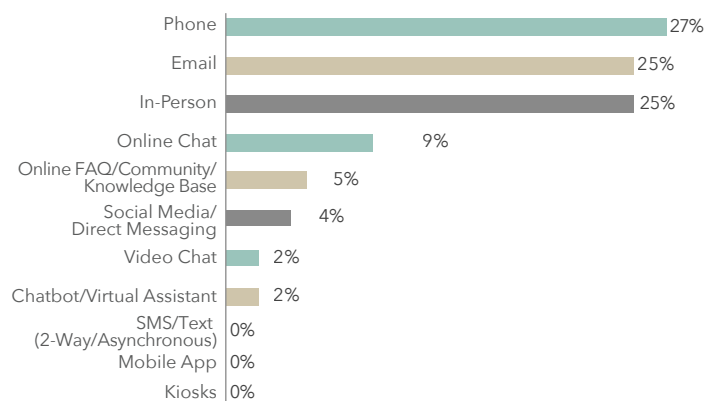| Solution	Percentage
Phone	33%
Online Chat	16%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	16%
Email	14%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	10%
Mobile App	5%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	5%
Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base	2%
Video Chat	0%
In-Person	0%
Kiosks	0%

THE WHY

Given the rate of Chatbot technology development and the ongoing challenges of the global labor market, the total number of contacts handled by Chatbots/Virtual Assistants is poised for rapid growth in the current cycle, especially as many organizations indicate a high level of investment in the space (page 40).

Although Phone and Email might dominate today's mix of CX touchpoints, things are changing rapidly. While Phone seems to be holding steady or even rising based on volume increase/decrease results (33% increase, 27% decrease), Email looks to be in a state of steady decline (14% increase versus 25% decrease). Chatbot/Virtual Assistant, SMS/Text, and Online Chat are all also on the rise when looking at the delta between indications of increase and decrease (+14%, +10%, and +7%, respectively).

Which of the following customer care solutions has seen the biggest decrease in volume in the past 12 months?

Solution	Percentage
Phone	27%
Email	25%
In-Person	25%
Online Chat	9%
Online FAQ/Community/Knowledge Base	5%
Social Media/Direct Messaging	4%
Video Chat	2%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	2%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	0%
Mobile App	0%
Kiosks	0%

PROGRAM STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY
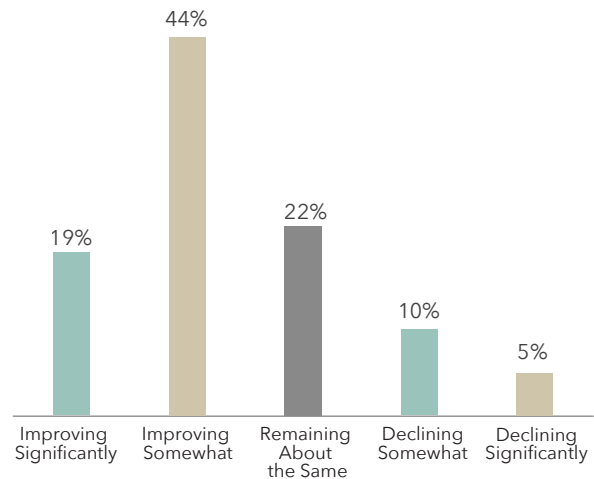
TOUCHPOINTS

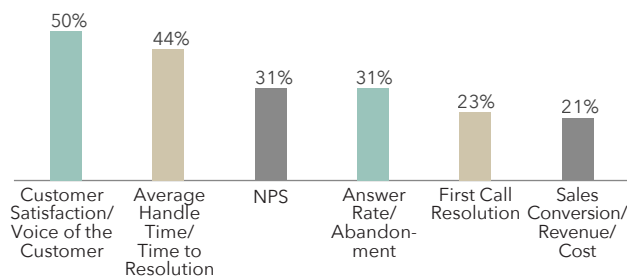**MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE**

CX TECHNOLOGY

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE — KPIS AND PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Undoubtedly, the past two years have brought no shortage of challenges. From the WFH pivot to navigating The Great Resignation, from servicing new business models and policies (think curbside pickup and mask mandates) to managing partner limitations – if nothing else, CX leaders have become masters of change management. Given such conditions, it's assuring that 63% of survey respondents observed improving performance in 2021, with only 15% indicating signs of declining performance. As conditions stabilize further, it likely more brands will get back to the business of optimizing performance and quality, leading to broader KPI improvements.

Generally speaking, over the past 12 months, have your critical program KPIs been improving, declining, or remaining the same?
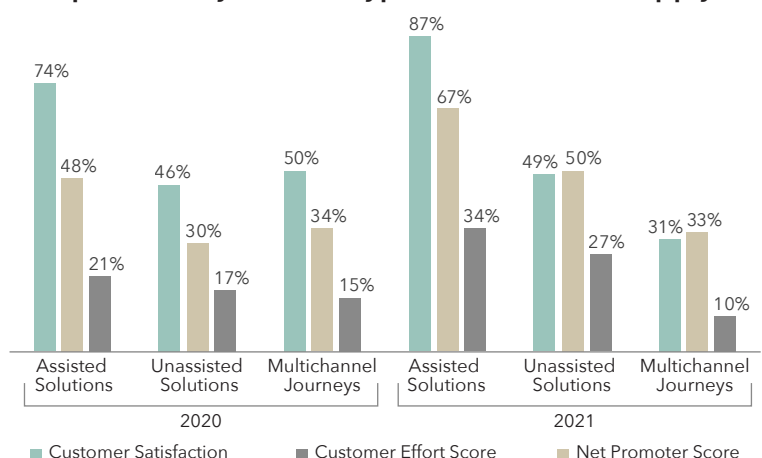
Improving Significantly	Improving Somewhat	Remaining About the Same	Declining Somewhat	Declining Significantly
19%	44%	22%	10%	5%

Which three key performance indicators (KPIs) are most critical and garner the most attention in the management of your CX operations?

Customer Satisfaction/ Voice of the Customer	Average Handle Time/ Time to Resolution	NPS	Answer Rate/ Abandon- ment	First Call Resolution	Sales Conversion/ Revenue/ Cost
50%	44%	31%	31%	23%	21%

When asked which KPIs are most critical and warrant the most attention, CSAT and Average Handle Time(AHT)/Time to Resolve rose to the top, followed closely by Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Answer Rate/Abandonment. As companies begin to place greater emphasis on the customer, there is a continued trend to deemphasize productivity measures (AHT) in favor of customer-focused measures (Time to Resolution). Inevitably, such moves empower agents, ultimately leading to better outcomes for customers.

Not surprisingly, the customer experience is most extensively measured across Assisted Channels, with 87% of survey respondents indicating they are measuring at least CSAT, with 56% of all respondents measuring at least two or more indicators for Assisted Solutions. Unassisted solutions also saw a steep year-over-year increase in coverage, with NPS gaining 20 points from 2020 to 2021. Although Multichannel coverage saw some signs of decline, it may be that brands are still working to integrate channels newly introduced in response to the pandemic, such as self-service or online chat.

Which metric(s) do you use to measure the customer experience by solution type? (Check all that apply.)

	2020			2021		
	Assisted Solutions	Unassisted Solutions	Multichannel Journeys	Assisted Solutions	Unassisted Solutions	Multichannel Journeys
Customer Satisfaction	74%	46%	50%	87%	49%	31%
Net Promoter Score	48%	30%	34%	67%	50%	33%
Customer Effort Score	21%	17%	15%	34%	27%	10%

■ Customer Satisfaction   ■ Customer Effort Score   ■ Net Promoter Score

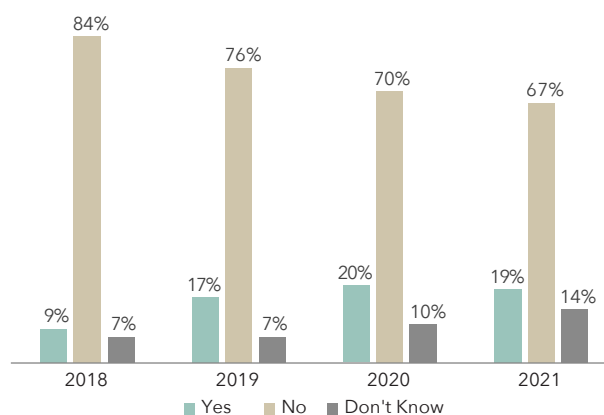# MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE – MEASURING THE EXPERIENCE

The way in which the customer experience is being measured is almost as crucial as what is being measured (page 50). In 2021, only one in five organizations (22%) indicated they were measuring the entire experience across all channels … something considered the gold standard in understanding the end-to-end journey. Combined with the 38% of respondents who are measuring the experience across some channels, 60% of survey participants measure some aspect of the cross-channel experience – increasingly important as multichannel becomes the norm. Cross-channel measurement is especially important for understanding things like consistency, responsiveness, and efficacy from channel to channel.

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

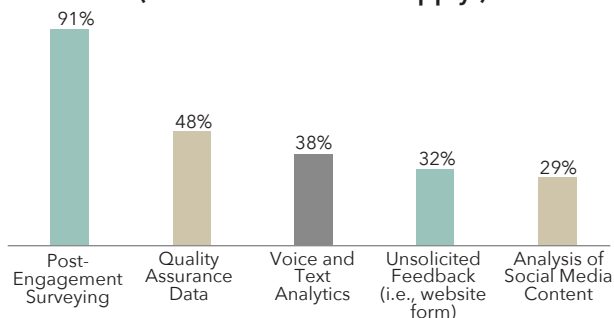| Measuring the entire customer experience across all channels	Measuring the experience across some channels	Measuring the experience in some channels independently	Measuring the experience in a single channel
22%	38%	26%	14%
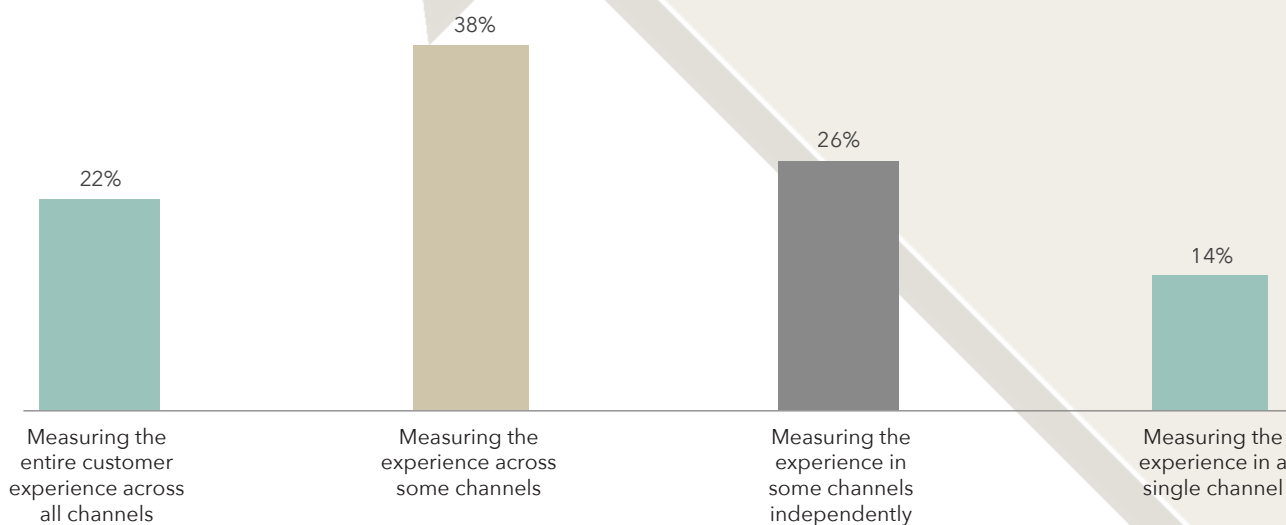
In the *CX Leaders Trends & Insights: 2021 Consumer Edition* report, 24% of the general U.S. population indicated they had, in the prior 12 months, used multiple channels to resolve a single customer care issue. If such a question were asked exclusively of those who had used customer care in that time, it's easy to imagine a significantly higher response than 24%. In other words, the multichannel experience is fast becoming ubiquitous with the CX journey. For this reason, multichannel-specific measurements are essential in understanding overall performance, particularly when it comes to hand-off ease and channel effectiveness.

Does your organization measure the performance of a multichannel journey against the performance of a single-channel journey (e.g., resolution or satisfaction rates)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
2018	9%	84%	7%
2019	17%	76%	7%
2020	20%	70%	10%
2021	19%	67%	14%

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE — VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER DATA

In which ways is your organization capturing customer sentiment and satisfaction information? (Please select all that apply.)

Post-Engagement Surveying	91%
Quality Assurance Data	48%
Voice and Text Analytics	38%
Unsolicited Feedback (i.e., website form)	32%
Analysis of Social Media Content	29%

Do you feel your organization is using program data (things like Voice of the Customer and Quality Assurance data) in an appropriate and productive way?

Yes	38%
Somewhat	43%
No	19%
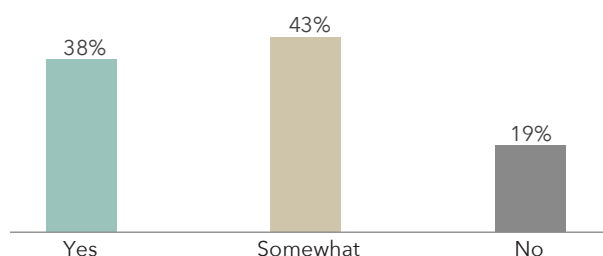
Whether the result of advancements in data gathering tools and capabilities or simply a newfound appreciation for the value of data-driven decision-making, the focus on Voice of the Customer data has grown more acute in recent years. Post-engagement surveying is table stakes, and many brands have moved into the next level of data gathering, looking to QA-derived data and analytics based on customer engagements. But, considering only 38% of survey respondents feel their organization is productive with their program data, companies are only starting to scratch the surface.

Interestingly, when survey respondents were asked what they could or should be doing to extract maximum value, responses focused more on how data was gathered versus used. Clearly, many companies continue to struggle with where and how to gather data, a critical first step which much be addressed and solved far ahead of developing effective ways for actioning the data.

Q: WHAT COULD OR SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION BE DOING DIFFERENTLY TO MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF YOUR PROGRAM'S DATA, AND WHAT IS WORKING BEST CURRENTLY?

A:

"Gather better feedback on the wider CX journey: pre-sale, during shopping experience, and post-sale. Currently, we only survey on post-sale interactions, which is very limiting."

"Folding VoC data back into the product roadmap."

"We are seeking to develop a more programmatic way of gathering customer feedback."

"We are aiming to link customer comments/questions with suspected product issues."

"Creating an aggregate from all the disparate systems would provide us with much better insight."

"We are working to find ways to measure qualitatively, not just quantitatively."

"We struggle with using consistent methodologies instead of different groups using different ways of collecting and managing data."

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE — PROACTIVE FOLLOW-UPS

As a part of Execs In The Know consumer research dating back to 2016, survey respondents who had a recent negative customer care experience were asked if a brand proactively followed up to attempt to remedy the situation. In six years of data, the average affirmative response to this question was 18%. Conversely, 94% of CX leaders indicated that they conduct such follow-ups in some capacity, either in some or all cases. It's an interesting disconnect, indicating one of a few possible scenarios: Either brands are overestimating their follow-up practices, consumers are underestimating the service they receive, or brands are failing to recognize each and every negative experience had by their customers. Although brands can't completely control perception, they can strengthen their listening posts to better capture customers who are dissatisfied with their customer care experience.

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

No
6%

Yes
42%

In Some, But
Not All Cases
52%
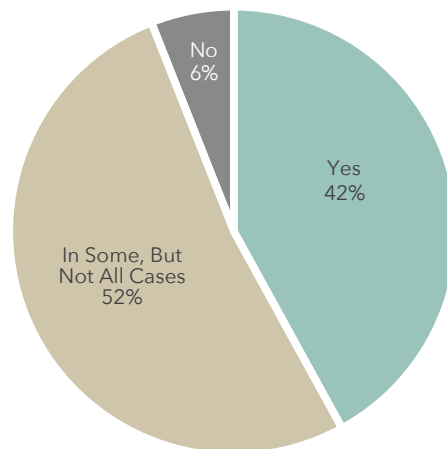
THE WHY

By implementing a proactive follow-up program, brands will not only have an opportunity to save a customer (consumers who receive a proactive follow-up are 15% less likely to abandon the brand), they'll also have an opportunity to identify and fix a broad range of policy gaps and process pain points.

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Cindy Oberkirsch
Director, Guest Care
Panera Bread

Q. What does the proactive follow-up process look like at your organization, and how is it triggered?

Like many in the hospitality industry, our digital channels have increased since 2020, causing us to pivot and look at new ways to enhance the CX. What used to be largely an eat-in cafe experience full of Panera Warmth and the ability to ensure the utmost guest satisfaction changed to an off-premise guest experience almost overnight. With the increase in delivery orders came the need to be able to rectify and make things right if a guest's order wasn't made to their satisfaction. Without an on-the-spot, in-cafe experience to make it right, we needed to produce a solution.

Our digital recovery solution was born, allowing us to recover and retain guests within the Panera Bread app. For example, if the guest experienced a late delivery, missing items, items made incorrectly, food or beverage quality was off, poor experience, etc., they can click on a "Need Help With Your order" link and, based on the issue, we can offer appeasement and add rewards to their MyPanera account in hopes that they will try us again.
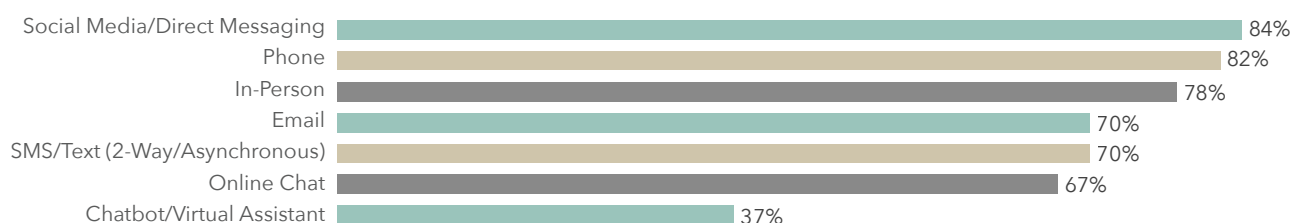
This year, we'd like to take this a step further and be more proactive rather than reactive. A post-order push will follow a delivery and offer a link to in-app recovery. "How was your food? Any problems with your order? Tap for help," as well as late order awareness: "We see your order was delivered later than promised, and we want to make it up to you." Our digital close loop effort aids in our goal to be as guest-responsive as possible, turning a poor CX around, ensuring we retain our guests.

# MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE — VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER DATA

Since Social Media as a channel of care first began picking up steam a little more than a decade ago, it was often perceived by consumers as a destination of last resort — a public forum that demanded a response. Based on CX leader survey results, this perception is well-backed, with the channel registering an average survey response of 84%. At the other end of the spectrum is Chatbot/Virtual Assistant at a paltry 37%. Many brands have indicated plans to deflect traditional channel (phone, email, etc.) volumes into chatbot and other self-help solutions. For these plans to work, brands will need to quickly expand the resolution capabilities of these types of solutions.

What is the approximate Resolution Rate of the following solutions?

| Solution	Rate
Social Media/Direct Messaging	84%
Phone	82%
In-Person	78%
Email	70%
SMS/Text (2-Way/Asynchronous)	70%
Online Chat	67%
Chatbot/Virtual Assistant	37%

In a question first introduced this year, fewer than half (45%) of survey respondents indicate they are measuring abandonment within their self-help/unassisted solutions. Given the vast number of unassisted solutions released into the wild over the past two years, this low rate of coverage signals a critical gap in understanding the end-to-end customer experience. Like multichannel, use of unassisted channels is set to expand rapidly in the coming years, and companies do themselves a disservice by not understanding where such solutions excel and, perhaps, fall short.

Do you measure how many customers attempt to use self-help or unassisted solutions but abandon the interaction before completing the task?
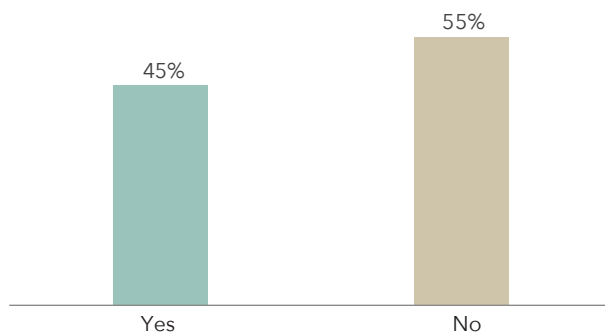
Yes	45%
No	55%

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to increase the resolution capabilities of your unassisted solution(s)?

|	2020	2021
Yes	76%	68%
No	12%	24%
No Unassisted Solutions Offered	12%	8%
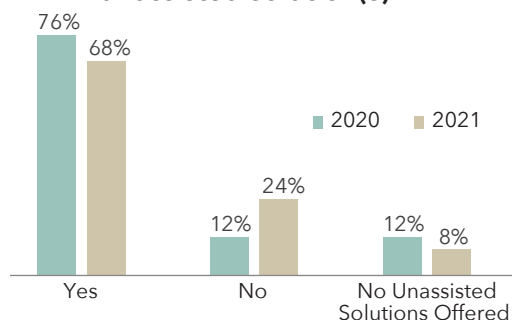
In a question introduced just last year as a part of the CXMB Series, fewer brands have specific initiatives to increase the resolution capabilities of unassisted channels (namely chatbots). Based on the 4% year-over-year decline of companies not offering an unassisted solution, it could be the case that those who have only recently introduced an unassisted solution are still in the launch phase and are still working to understand the current capabilities ahead of introducing specific initiatives for their still-very-new, unassisted solutions. As more brands measure unassisted solution abandonment, the expectation is that more initiatives to increase resolution capabilities will be introduced across the industry.

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE — CROSS-CHANNEL EXPERIENCE AND CREATING GREATER CONSISTENCY

When asked about providing a seamless, consistent, and easy experience, 2021 results present a mixed bag. On the one hand, 17% of CX leader respondents answered, "Yes," the highest response since the question was first asked in 2016 (when the question garnered a 26% affirmative response). At the same time, 39% indicated, "No," significantly above the five-year running average of 30%. Time and again, consistency and ease are engagement attributes highly valued by consumers — only ever outshone by "Honest and Fair Treatment."

Does your organization do a good job of providing a seamless, consistent, and easy experience as your customers transition between different channels and solutions?
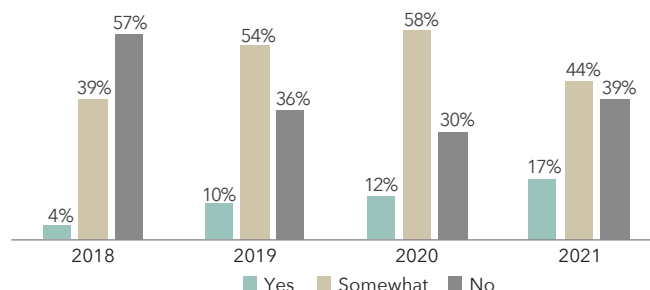
Year	Yes	Somewhat	No
2018	4%	39%	57%
2019	10%	54%	36%
2020	12%	58%	30%
2021	17%	44%	39%

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

Year	Yes	No	Don't Know
2018	71%	24%	5%
2019	48%	43%	9%
2020	47%	40%	13%
2021	64%	25%	11%
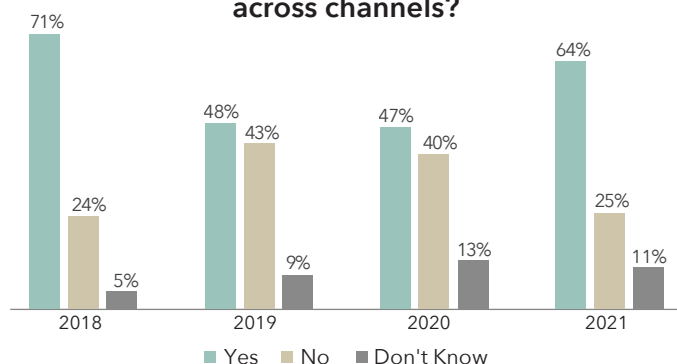
Roughly two-thirds of CX leaders (slightly more, if removing "Don't Know" responses) indicated they have specific plans for creating greater consistency. Of the initiatives described, most fall into one of two categories:

- Laying the groundwork for change (mapping the current experience and documenting pain points)
- Investing in integration-focused technology

Q:
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SPECIFIC INITIATIVE(S) TO CREATE GREATER CONSISTENCY ACROSS CHANNELS.

A:
"I am leading a Customer Experience and Service Excellence initiative to better engage with our customers in more meaningful ways …"

"We are in the near-term implementation of a total reorganization of our CX team with a goal, in part, of reducing hand-offs and improving consistency."

"We are documenting the customer journey, aligning objectives and KPIs, and developing agent incentives."

"As a part of our resolution improvement initiative, we have identified our three channels with the lowest resolution percentage … we're going to start by focusing on these."
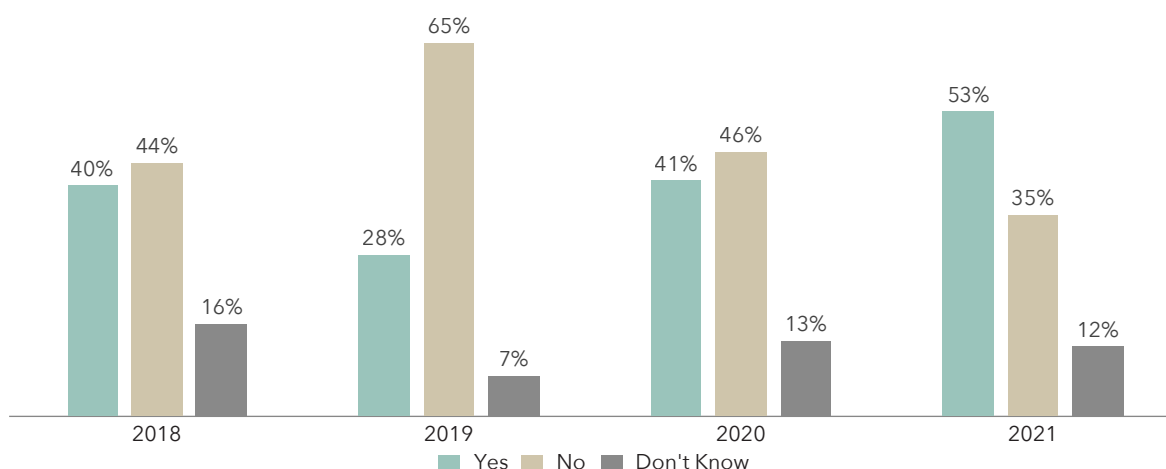
"Cross-training various teams to be able to handle a greater variety of questions and issue types."

"We're implementing a true omnichannel solution that includes AI-support."

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE – CREATING GREATER EASE

When it comes to creating greater ease, more than half (53%) of all survey respondents indicated specific initiatives were in the works. Of the initiatives described, slightly more than one-third involved initial investments or further enhancements to self-help solutions, including improving the transition from self-help to assisted solutions. Predictive help and guided solutioning were two other themes touched up numerous times. There is the widespread expectation within the industry that these approaches will become increasingly important as brands seek to create an ultra-easy experience for their customers, regardless of channel.

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

Year	Yes	No	Don't Know
2018	40%	44%	16%
2019	28%	65%	7%
2020	41%	46%	13%
2021	53%	35%	12%

Yes   No   Don't Know

Q: BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SPECIFIC INITIATIVE(S) TO CREATE GREATER EASE FOR CUSTOMERS AS THEY NAVIGATE ACROSS CHANNELS.

A:

"Ensuring that the CRM is a single source of truth so anyone can see, at a glance, the status of the customer, and be empowered to step in to help."

"We are enhancing our self-help solutions, going further in the direction of omnichannel, and AI."

"We're focused on helping agents understand the context of customer 'need,' providing the ability to predict optimal solution sets."

"Continuing ongoing work on guided service and improving the flow from automation to live agent."

"We're building greater self-help functionality via our online customer portal, enabling immediate transfer to a live agent, as necessary."

"We're implementing asynchronous chat and developing improved reporting across all channels."

PROGRAM STRATEGY & OPERATIONS
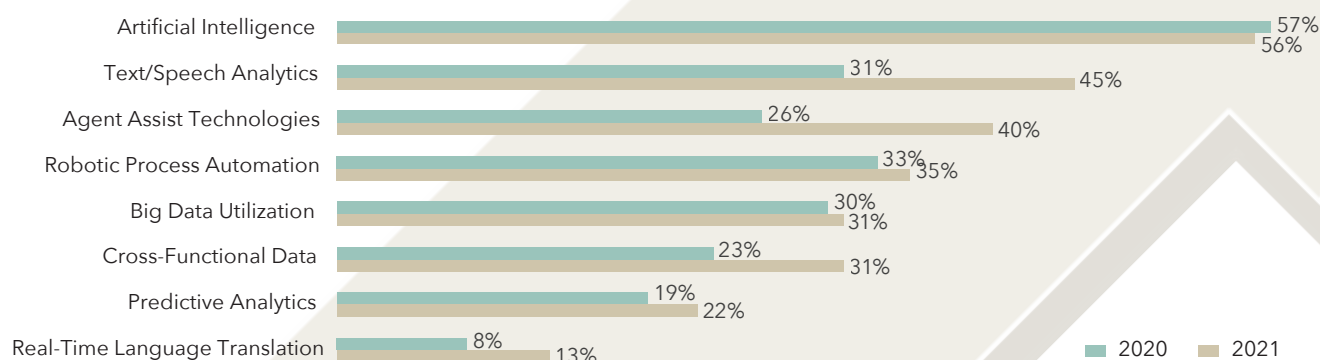
CX DRIVERS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

TOUCHPOINTS

MEASUREMENT AND PERFORMANCE

CX TECHNOLOGY

CX TECHNOLOGY — INVESTMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS

Based on year-over-year comparisons, 2022 looks to be the year of expanded investment in CX support technologies. Not only are a higher percentage of companies planning investments in each respective technology, CX Technology in general has been named as the area of highest investment (page 40). In terms of investment growth, Text/Speech Analytics and Agent Assist lead the way (+14 points each), though Artificial Intelligence remains as the current investment leader, once again topping a response rate of 50%.

Which of these operational support technologies is your organization currently investing in? (Select all that apply.)

Technology	2020	2021
Artificial Intelligence	57%	56%
Text/Speech Analytics	31%	45%
Agent Assist Technologies	26%	40%
Robotic Process Automation	33%	35%
Big Data Utilization	30%	31%
Cross-Functional Data	23%	31%
Predictive Analytics	19%	22%
Real-Time Language Translation	8%	13%

Compared to your competition, how would you describe your organization's level of competitiveness when it comes to investment in emerging CX-related technologies?

Very Competitive	Somewhat Competitive	About Average	Somewhat Uncompetitive	Very Uncompetitive
20%	27%	27%	20%	6%
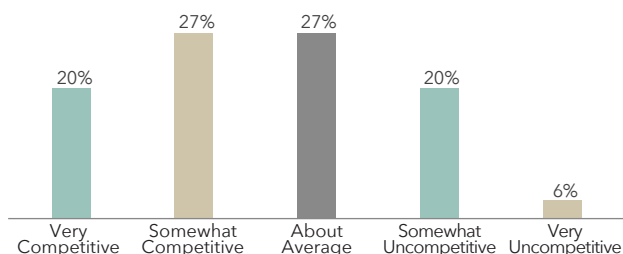
Compared to all companies in all industries, how would you describe your organization's level of competitiveness when it comes to investment in emerging CX-related technologies?

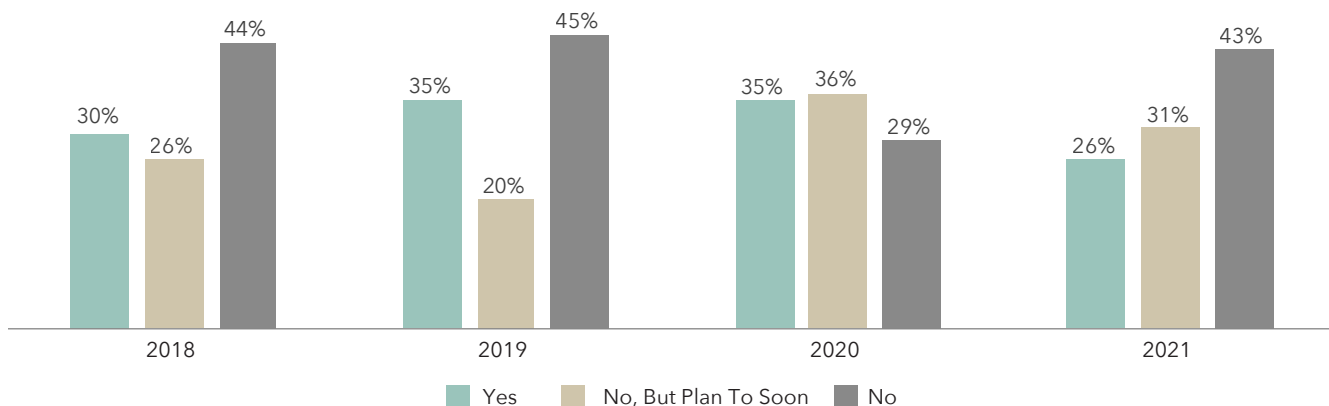| Very Competitive	Somewhat Competitive	About Average	Somewhat Uncompetitive	Very Un-competitive
11%	25%	29%	20%	15%
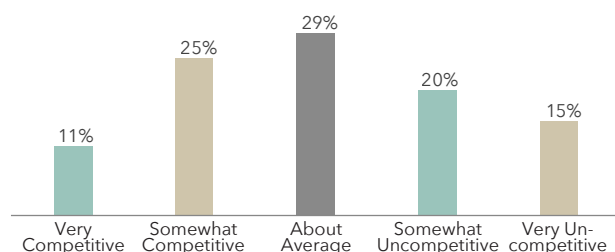
Only 26% of survey respondents saw themselves at a disadvantage against their sector peers when it came to investing in CX-related technologies. Compared to all companies, even those outside of their specific sector, the number who felt they were at a competitive disadvantage rose slightly, hitting 35%.

Based on open-ended responses examining general CX challenges and opportunities, barriers to technological competitiveness break down into a few different buckets, including effectiveness in making the business case for specific investments and initiatives, as well as establishing and strengthening internal relationships (like with IT, for instance) to help drive and deliver on key projects. Successful investment in CX-related support technologies, including those that make the customer care experience easier and more efficient, are key factors in creating a better experience for customers.

CX TECHNOLOGY — ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CONTACT CENTERS

The percentage of survey respondents already (or soon to be) applying the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within their contact center fell moderately year-over-year, coming in at a combined rate of 57% versus 71% in 2020. It's likely that most of this reduction can be attributed to the year-to-year differences between the survey cohorts, as AI is undoubtedly a primary focal point for CX-related technology investment.

Has your company applied the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within your contact center organization?

Year	Yes	No, But Plan To Soon	No
2018	30%	26%	44%
2019	35%	20%	45%
2020	35%	36%	29%
2021	26%	31%	43%

PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Lori Pon

Director, Claim Strategy & Innovation

AAA – The Auto Club Group

Q. What have been some critical learnings in developing and deploying AI-powered CX solutions?

The key to conquering the challenges of deploying AI-powered CX solutions is striking the right balance of people, process, technology, and data. Selecting the right processes and engaging the right partners — both internal and external — is vital to success. Typically, AI-powered solutions transform traditional ways of working, so involving key stakeholders and impacted communities early and often is key to the success of your innovation initiatives. Selecting the right process, optimizing it, and identifying target KPIs must be done prior to commencing development. Engaging end user communities and stakeholders from incubation to implementation allows you to more thoughtfully anticipate and prepare for change. Leveraging proof of value, demos, and soft launches allows you to evaluate the effectiveness of intelligent automation and get feedback. Digital agents may be engaged to validate training, job aids, and the solution. Valuable insights can be gleaned to tweak AI-powered solutions prior to the full launch. Starting small allows you to test, learn, and iterate. Post-adoption analysis is another key discipline to achieving project objectives, identifying improvement opportunities and optimizing the solution. Innovating faster, better, and smarter is vital to reimagining the customer journey and supercharging your CX!

# CX TECHNOLOGY – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Customer-Facing applications continue to be the primary use of AI-powered solutions within the contact center environment, although its lead has been cut back in 2021 results. Customer-Facing solutions take shape primarily as chatbots and other self-service solutions. Furthermore, AI's use in data and process management remains elevated after growing significantly in back-to-back results in 2018 through 2020.

How would you describe the specific application(s) of your AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply.)
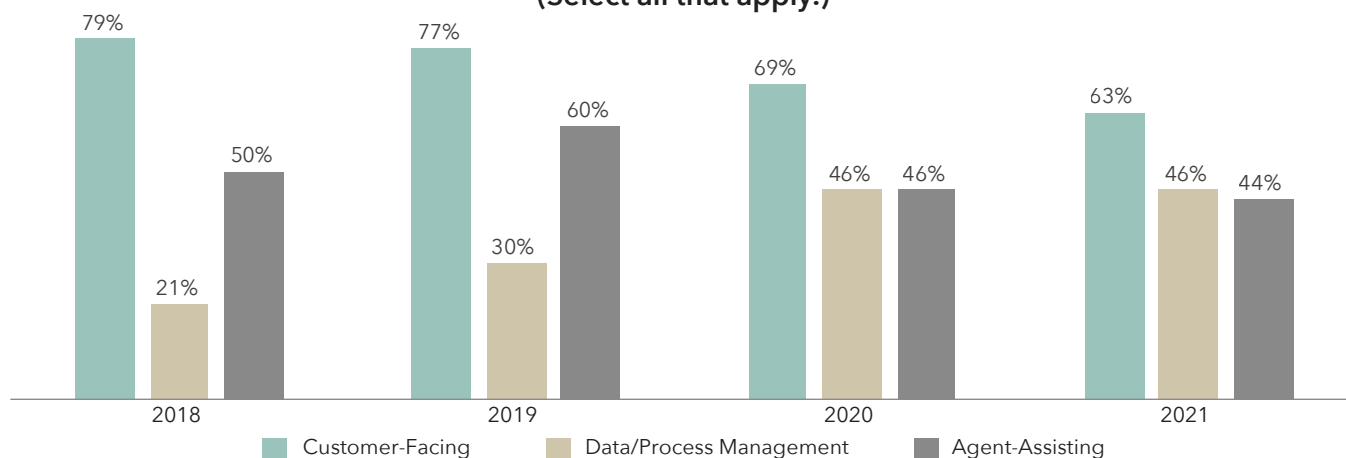
The objective of "Improve the Customer Experience" continues to lead the way within contact centers when it comes to AI-powered solutions. In practical terms, this means improving the speed, convenience, accuracy, and resolution rate of engagements. Companies are also beginning to use AI-powered solutions to create personalized and proactive customer experiences that utilize customer data to predict customer needs. While still early in its development, predictive customer care is the next frontier of creating an exceptional experience for customers.

Which objectives are you primarily trying to accomplish with your use or future use of AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply.)
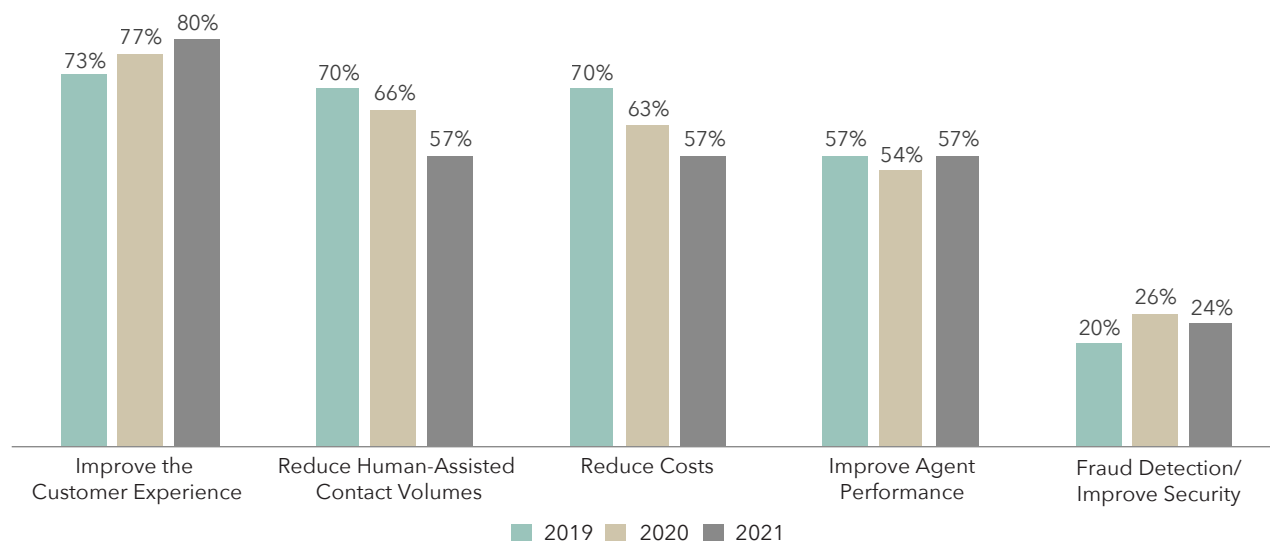
CONCLUSIONS • PROGRAM STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

- Sixty-nine percent of CX leaders expect "Support Technologies" to be among their top three areas of investment in 2022, with "Recruiting, Hiring, Onboarding, and Training/Coaching" a distant second, at 32% (page 40)

- While CX leaders think consumers mostly want more Self-Service solutions to make the process as easy as possible, most consumers actually want reduced wait times and better agents (page 41 and 64); at the same time, only 45% of respondents are measuring the abandonment rates of their self-service solutions (page 54)

- Among solutions not currently offered but are a part of the short- to near-term plan, SMS/Text topped the list with 57% of CX leaders indicating the solution was a part of the current strategy

- Nineteen percent of CX leaders don't think their organizations are using program data in an appropriate and productive way

Two years past the first wave of changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and brands are beginning to refocus their energies from a reactive to a proactive stance. Investments are beginning to turn toward better remote monitoring, optimized performance, and deflection of volume via automated solutions. But, these investments shouldn't come at the expense of continuing to evolve program strategies toward a better overall experience, which is what consumers actually want.

Brands are also using this opportunity to invest in new assisted solutions and contact channels like SMS/Text. These moves are essential in keeping up with evolving customer expectations, but only if the solutions work, and work well. Resolution rates have to match with tried-and-true channels, like phone, and the experience must be consistent from a brand perspective.

Effective use of program data (particularly Voice of the Customer data) also continues to be an area of rich opportunity for many brands. Only 38% of CX leaders felt they were effective in this area. Program data, when effectively collected, managed, and actioned, can lead to improvement far beyond CX operations, impacting things like product, engineering, marketing, and other critical areas of the wider organization. But, it all starts with the partnership between CX and IT.

Critical Questions Brands Should Be Asking Themselves:

- **Are we investing in the right areas to drive an improved experience not just for our customers, but also for our employees?**

- **Are we meeting our customers on the channels that work best for them, regardless of whether channels are self-service or not?**

- **Are we maximizing program data to drive actions that improve our organization as a whole?**

CONSUMER COMPARISONS
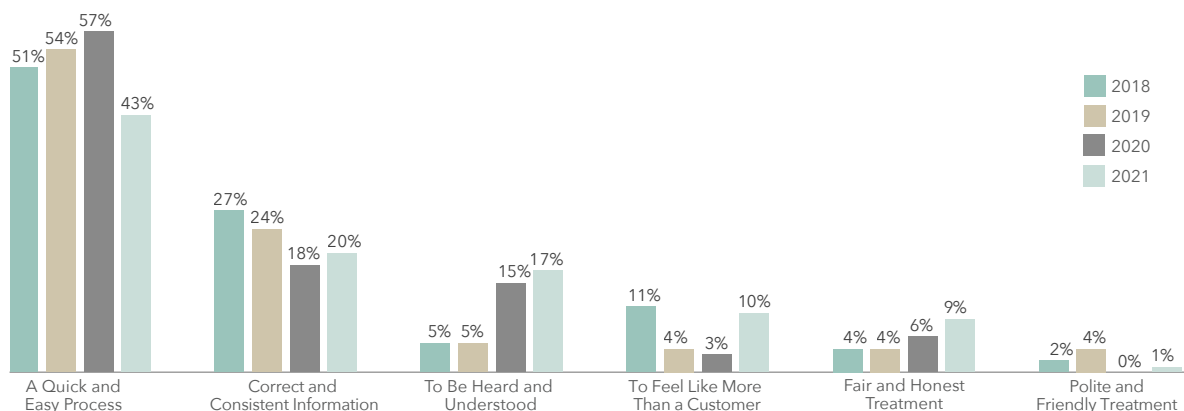
CONSUMER COMPARISONS

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

What do consumers really want out of their customer care experience? First and foremost, they obviously want their issue resolved. But, what next? According to consumers themselves, they want "Fair and Honest Treatment" more than anything else, and this has consistently been the case since this question was first asked in 2017. This is not to dismiss the importance of "A Quick and Easy Process," always a top pick for corporate survey participants and reliable runner-up for consumers, but this result speaks to the value and importance of fair, customer-centric policies. Brands should seek to understand how their customers view their practices and policies, highlighting the importance of an effective Voice of the Customer program.

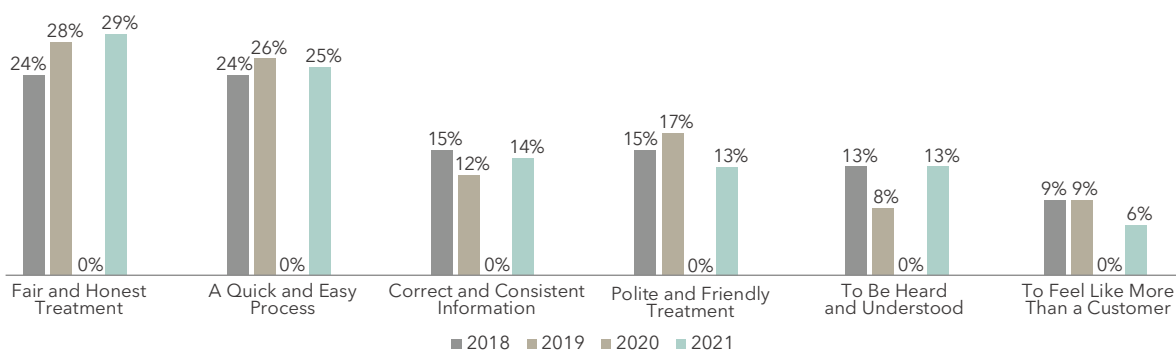**CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021**
CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

Aside from getting their issues resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important to your customers when trying to resolve a customer-care issue?

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

	A Quick and Easy Process	Correct and Consistent Information	To Be Heard and Understood	To Feel Like More Than a Customer	Fair and Honest Treatment	Polite and Friendly Treatment
2018	51%	27%	5%	11%	4%	2%
2019	54%	24%	5%	4%	4%	4%
2020	57%	18%	15%	3%	6%	0%
2021	43%	20%	17%	10%	9%	1%

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

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

	Fair and Honest Treatment	A Quick and Easy Process	Correct and Consistent Information	Polite and Friendly Treatment	To Be Heard and Understood	To Feel Like More Than a Customer
2018	24%	24%	15%	15%	13%	9%
2019	28%	26%	12%	17%	8%	9%
2020	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2021	29%	25%	14%	13%	13%	6%

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
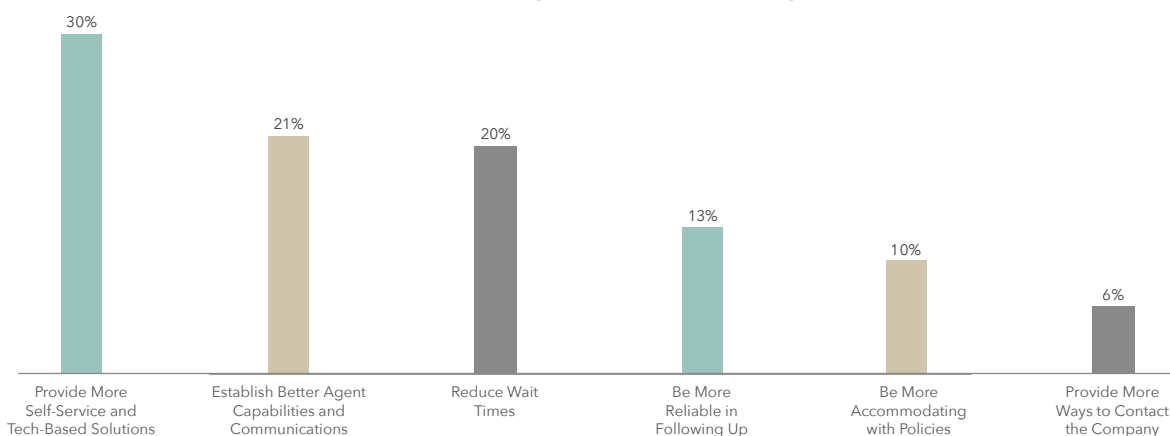
CONSUMER COMPARISONS

MAKING THE RESOLUTION PROCESS EASIER

In a significant disconnect, CX leaders point to "More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions" as the thing they think consumers desire most in creating an easier means to issue resolution, whereas consumers actually want "Reduced Wait Times" and what amounts to higher-quality agents. In fact, "More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions" was the least selected option by consumers in 2021, with only a 6% response rate. Simply put, consumers want fast solutions, and they want to work with capable, empowered agents to get there — a conclusion that resonates across a variety of consumer results from both 2021 and prior.

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
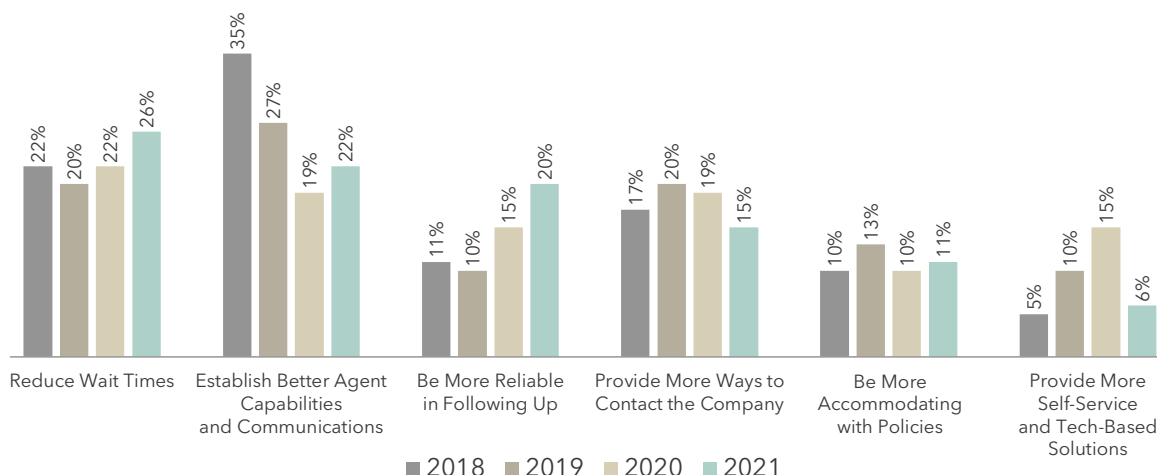## CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

What do you think consumers want brands to do to make the resolution process as easy as possible?

Provide More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions	Establish Better Agent Capabilities and Communications	Reduce Wait Times	Be More Reliable in Following Up	Be More Accommodating with Policies	Provide More Ways to Contact the Company
30%	21%	20%	13%	10%	6%

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

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

	Reduce Wait Times	Establish Better Agent Capabilities and Communications	Be More Reliable in Following Up	Provide More Ways to Contact the Company	Be More Accommodating with Policies	Provide More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions
2018	22%	35%	11%	17%	10%	5%
2019	20%	27%	10%	20%	13%	10%
2020	22%	19%	15%	19%	10%	15%
2021	26%	22%	20%	15%	11%	6%

CX Leaders Trends & Insights   64   www.ExecsInTheKnow.com

CONSUMER COMPARISONS

MEETING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

As one might expect, consumer needs and expectations will forever evolve, always chasing that last best experience. The below results illustrate this point, with 70% of consumers from recent surveying (2021) indicating they feel their needs and expectations aren't generally being met by today's customer care departments. On the other hand, 84% of CX leaders feel they are generally meeting those very same needs and expectations. This mismatch in perception spotlights the importance of brands knowing their customers and fully understanding the current (and even future) expectations as well as the competitive landscape, especially in a world where impressions and experiences are critical differentiators in determining future purchase intent.

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
**CORPORATE EDITION RESULT**

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

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Yes	88%	76%	82%	84%
No	12%	24%	18%	16%
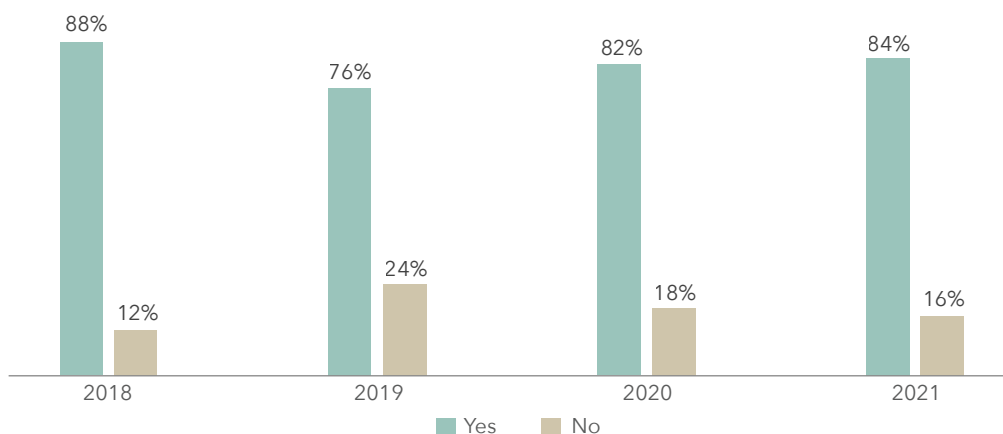
CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

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

|	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Yes	40%	39%	35%	N/A	30%
No	60%	61%	65%		70%
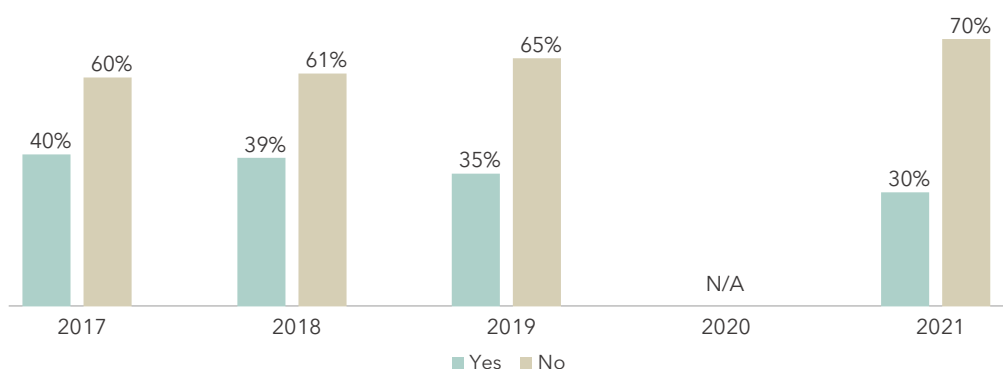
THE IMPACT OF REPUTATION

In what might be viewed as a loaded question for CX leaders, 99% feel a brand's reputation for good customer care greatly influences the purchase decisions of consumers. While somewhat in agreement (with 66% of consumers indicating the same), the 14% of consumers who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" should give brands pause to reflect on what else might be at play in helping consumers in their decision-making process, namely price, selection, quality, prior experience with the brand, etc. Because the decision to purchase a product or service is so multifaceted, this should fuel initiatives to create greater cohesion at organizations. Success isn't just an outcome-based metric. It starts with strong internal relationships, unifying strategies and objectives, and a shared mission. The brands that do this best are the very same ones that start by putting the customer at the center of everything they do.

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: A brand's reputation for good customer service greatly influences consumers' decisions to do business with said brand.

58%	41%	1%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

99%
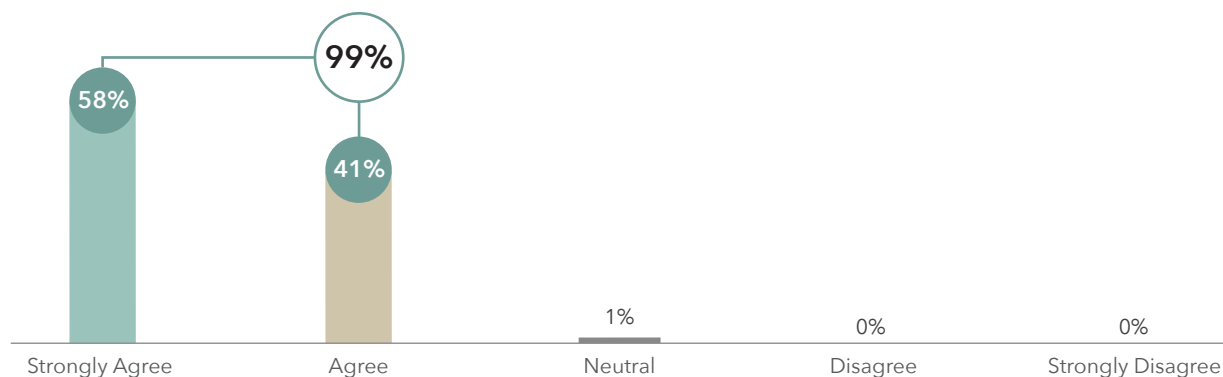
CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

How much do you agree or disagree with the following: A brand's reputation for good customer service greatly influences my decision to do business with said brand.

|				
40%	26%	20%	6%	8%
Stongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

66%
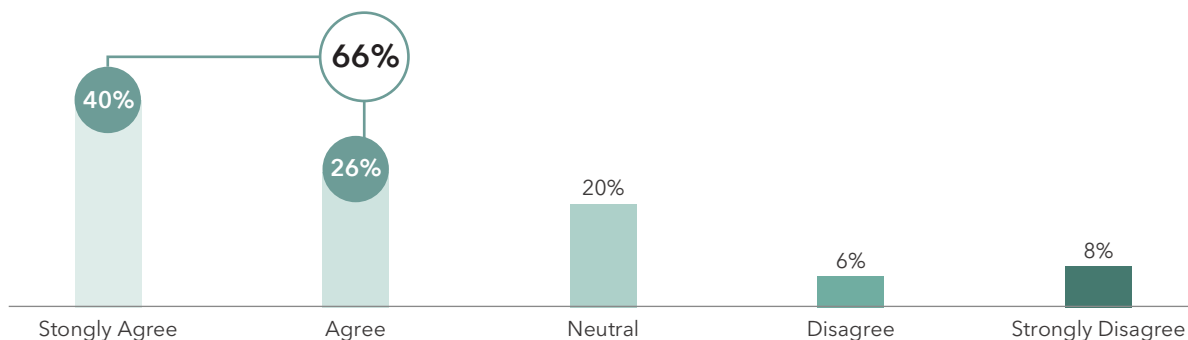
CREATING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

CX leaders and consumers were well-aligned on the question of whether good customer care leads to loyalty, with 54% of corporate respondents indicating they "Strongly Agree" with the sentiment compared to 52% of consumers. This result should serve as a powerful motivator for brands that might be trying to understand which types of investments can drive customer loyalty, particularly in an environment where the ability to churn is made increasing easy, and so many products and services have become commoditized. This result is further emphasized on the following page by the percentage of consumers (53%) who feel brands should focus their improvement efforts on the Customer Care Experience as opposed to other areas of the shared brand-customer journey.

**CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021**
CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Receiving good customer care makes consumers very loyal customers.**

92%				
54%	38%	8%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
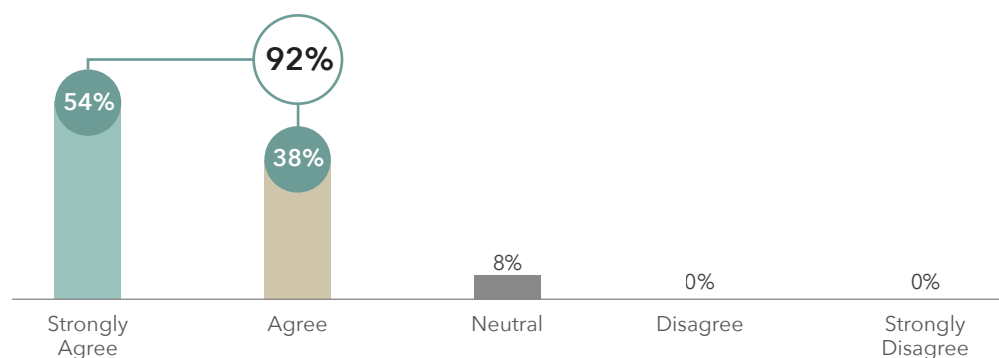
CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following:
Receiving good customer care makes me a very loyal customer.**

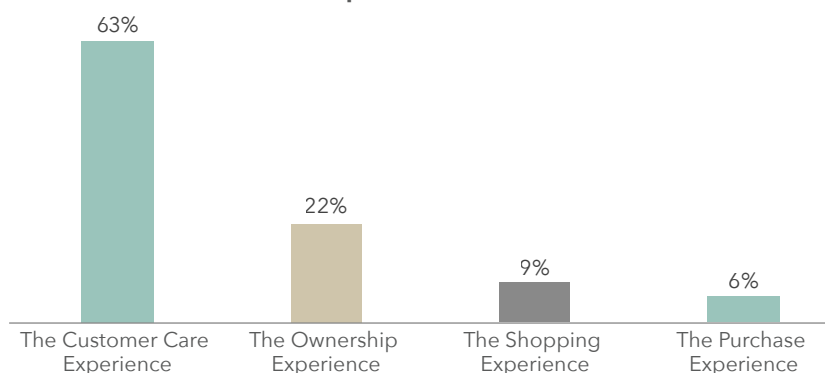|				
75%				
52%	23%	13%	5%	7%
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
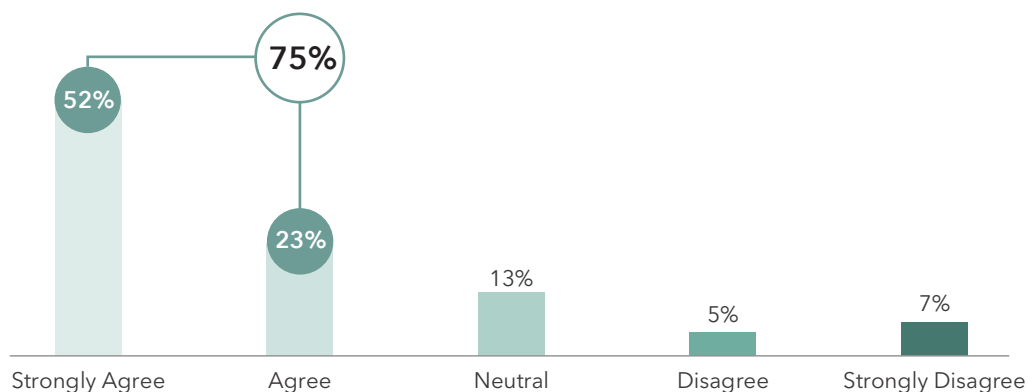
IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Consumers and CX leaders tend to agree on where brands should direct their improvement efforts. When companies focus on the customer experience, they tend to enjoy higher levels of loyalty, increased revenue potential, and generate positivity toward their brands. But, it's more than this. Consumers are in no way apathetic to receiving a positive customer experience. They clearly know the value of great CX and will seek to do business with companies that make issue resolution easy, fair, and a positive end-to-end experience. Doing these things well makes for a clear competitive advantage.

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
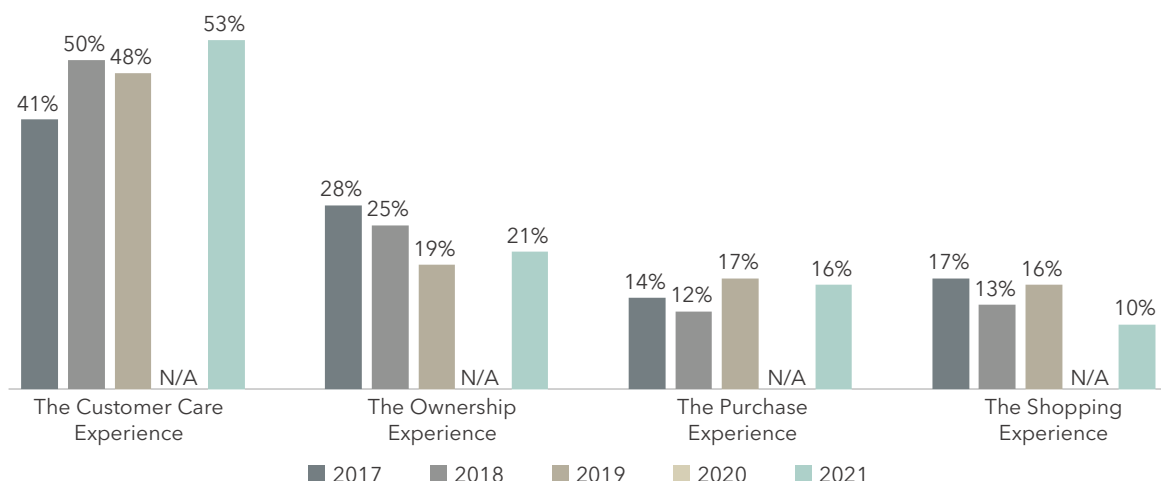## CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

Where do you think consumers feel brands should focus their improvement efforts?

Category	Value
The Customer Care Experience	63%
The Ownership Experience	22%
The Shopping Experience	9%
The Purchase Experience	6%

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

In general, where should brands focus improvement efforts?

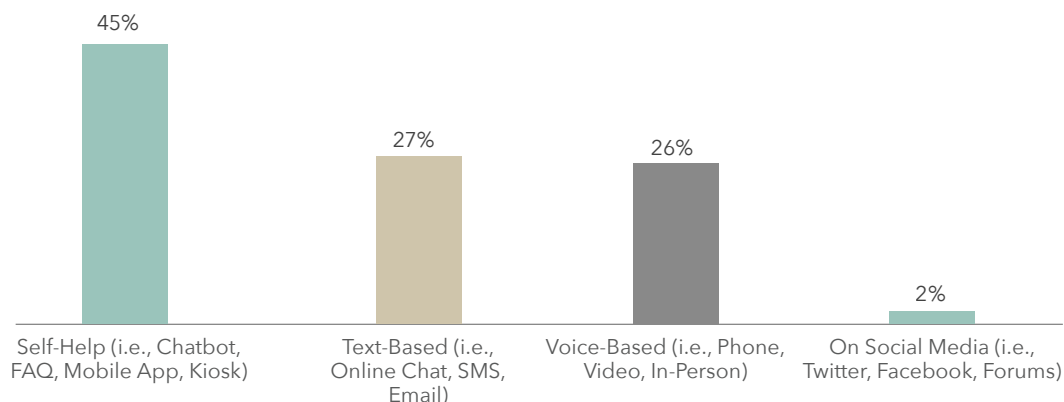| Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
The Customer Care Experience	41%	50%	48%	N/A	53%
The Ownership Experience	28%	25%	19%	N/A	21%
The Purchase Experience	14%	12%	17%	N/A	16%
The Shopping Experience	17%	13%	16%	N/A	10%

CONTACT PREFERENCES

In a pairing all about preferences, CX leaders continue to overestimate consumers' preference for Self-Help solutions. While 45% of CX leaders think consumers would prefer Self-Help, only 15% of consumers actually do. Overwhelmingly, consumers want to speak with someone, and this is evenly split between Voice- and Text-Based solutions. Perhaps this is because automated solutions have not yet caught up to the resolution capabilities of a knowledgeable, empowered agent. Or, maybe nothing truly beats the experience of getting help from a person. At any rate, CX organization would do well to understand the precise preferences of their own customers, making sure they are exactly where their customers want to be.

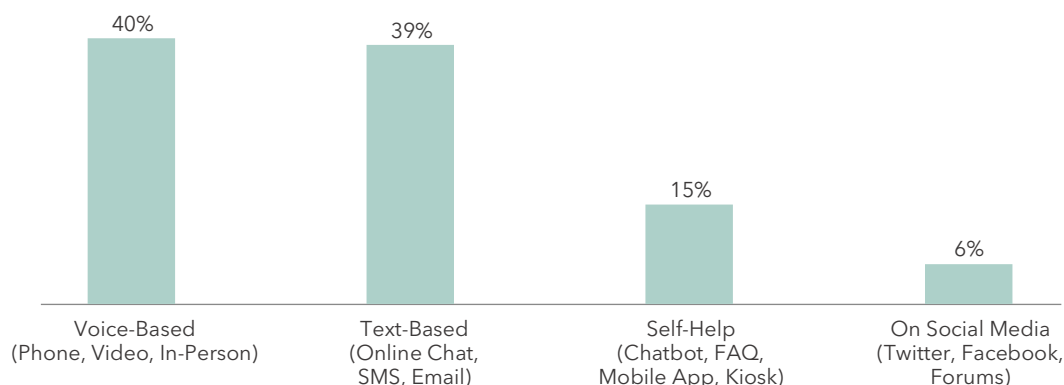**CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021**
CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

Assuming the customer care issue would be resolved, which contact method do you think consumers would prefer to use?

Self-Help (i.e., Chatbot, FAQ, Mobile App, Kiosk)	Text-Based (i.e., Online Chat, SMS, Email)	Voice-Based (i.e., Phone, Video, In-Person)	On Social Media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Forums)
45%	27%	26%	2%

CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS 2021
CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

If you knew your customer care issue would be resolved regardless of contact channel, which would be your preferred contact method?

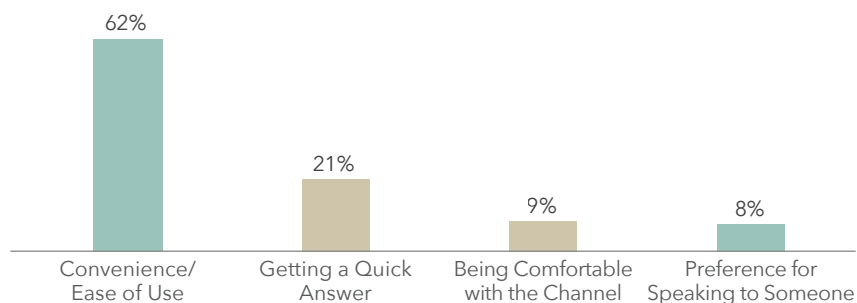| Voice-Based (Phone, Video, In-Person)	Text-Based (Online Chat, SMS, Email)	Self-Help (Chatbot, FAQ, Mobile App, Kiosk)	On Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Forums)
40%	39%	15%	6%

CONSUMER COMPARISONS

DETERMINING CONTACT PREFERENCES

Echoing the result pairing from the previous page, CX leaders again underestimate the consumer's desire to connect with a real person. Although the consumer question was presented in a "Select all that apply" format, the disconnect is evident. Naturally, the preference to speak with someone is somewhat tied to demographics, which 59% of the consumers indicated in the below result, 65+ in age, preferring to speak with someone, compared to only 35% of those ages 25–34. Nonetheless, brands should expect that many people will continue to prefer connecting with live agent well into the future, regardless of age or other demographical influences.
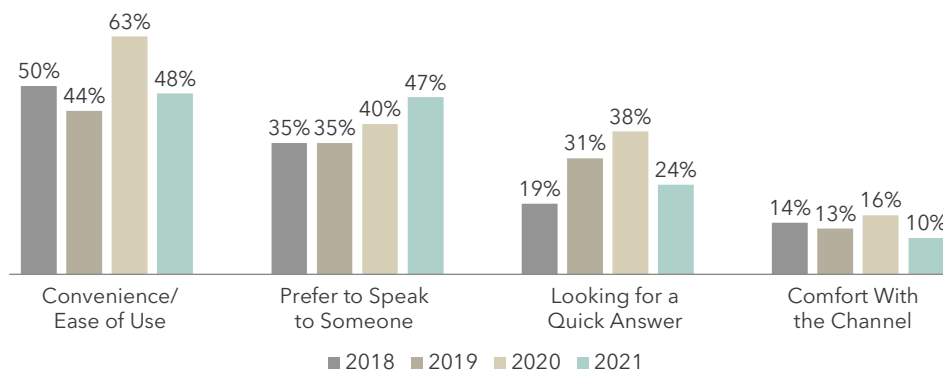
CORPORATE EDITION RESULT

What do you think is the biggest factor in determining the contact method preferences of consumers?

62%	Convenience/Ease of Use
21%	Getting a Quick Answer
9%	Being Comfortable with the Channel
8%	Preference for Speaking to Someone

CONSUMER EDITION RESULT

What are the biggest factors in determining your preferred channel of care? (Select all that apply)

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Convenience/Ease of Use	50%	44%	63%	48%
Prefer to Speak to Someone	35%	35%	40%	47%
Looking for a Quick Answer	19%	31%	38%	24%
Comfort With the Channel	14%	13%	16%	10%

■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021

ABOUT THE STUDY'S AUTHOR

Execs In The Know

Execs In The Know brings together customer experience (CX) leaders from across industries in an effort to advance the conversation and set a new agenda for delivering amazing experiences for consumers. As a global community of the brightest minds in CX, Execs In The Know provides opportunities to learn, share, network, and engage to innovate. Operating under the motto, "Leaders Learning From Leaders," Execs In The Know facilitates many opportunities for community engagement, such as its bi-annual national event, Customer Response Summit; virtual CX series, CustomerCONNECT; and private, online community, Know It All "KIA." There are also exclusive, laser-focused engagements like industry briefings and executive roundtables. Execs In The Know also guides and informs the industry with a rich tapestry of CX-related content that includes *CX Insight* magazine, industry research, webinars, blogs, and much more.

To learn more about Execs In The Know, visit https://execsintheknow.com

ABOUT THE STUDY'S SPONSOR

CRESTA

Nailing customer experience is tough. Every conversation, across every channel, counts. And while much in our lives has changed since the 1960s, the site of most customer conversations has not — the contact center. Yet, with 17M overworked, undertrained, and understaffed agents globally, contact centers remain the hubs of customer experience. Agents and their Managers thus hold the keys to unlocking more revenue, less churn, and greater customer satisfaction.

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Although this report is only the second in a new series of CX-related research, Execs In The Know hosts an extensive library of prior research. Included in this library is the *Customer Experience Management Benchmark* (CXMB) series, the predecessor of the *CX Leaders Trends & Insights* series.

To find the latest volume of *CX Leaders Trends & Insights*, as well as previously published research, visit the Execs In The Know Research landing page:
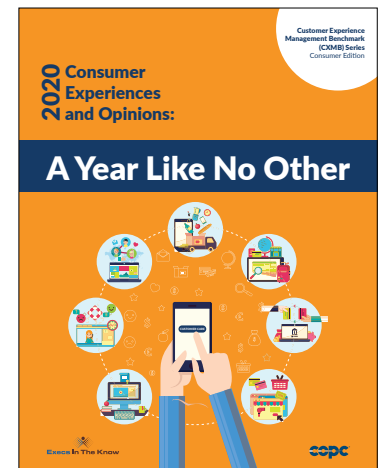
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