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Fast Tracking the Omnichannel Movement

Is Your Business Set Up for Success?

Revealing customer trends that support the need for analytics and automation efficiencies.

Executive Summary

Customers today expect a high level of excellence from the brands they engage with. Not only is a quality product expected, but personalized customer experience is demanded. A recent study discovered that 93% of customers are likely to become repeat customers at companies that deliver excellent customer service,[1] and 84% of companies that work to improve their customer experience report an increase in revenue.[2]

As customer expectations continue to climb, more and more businesses are seeking alternative digital channels - outside of the phone and email - to facilitate that need. Our report, which surveyed over 500 international businesses, shows that 42% are already utilizing channels like chat and messaging to better communicate with their customers and that an additional 32% **plan to** implement such channels in the future.

While many companies are well on their way to becoming more omnichannel, the unforeseen events of COVID-19 earlier this year have significantly condensed those timelines for many organizations. Businesses are finding themselves having to make adjustments to their operations on the fly to support their new remote workforce and unexpected spikes in customer interactions.

With businesses now quickly changing course to respond to the new normal, it begs the question: do those companies have the right technologies and processes in place to successfully support the influx of customer data that will follow by adding more customer communication channels to their mix?

Our report reveals that many businesses have substantial gaps in automation and performance measurement -- something that will need to be resolved quickly to successfully manage multiple channel types and overall customer experience.

Methodology

To better understand how businesses are managing customer interactions, AVOXI - the leading cloud communications provider - surveyed more than 500 international decision-makers across 70 industries to identify what communication channels and technologies they plan to incorporate in the near future despite COVID-19, along with how they anticipate automating or analyzing their data and processes.

Businesses Eye Non-Traditional Conversation Channels

A majority of businesses (94%) still rely on traditional conversation channels like email and phone to connect with their customers. However, many of them are setting their sights on new channels to enhance customer experience. With the consuming need for instantaneous solutions, alternative channels such as SMS-text, social media, WhatsApp, and Live Chat are successfully filling the void.

What are the current channels you use to communicate with customers today?

Channel	
Email	
Phone	
Chat	
Social	
WhatsApp	
Face-to-Face	
Text	

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%
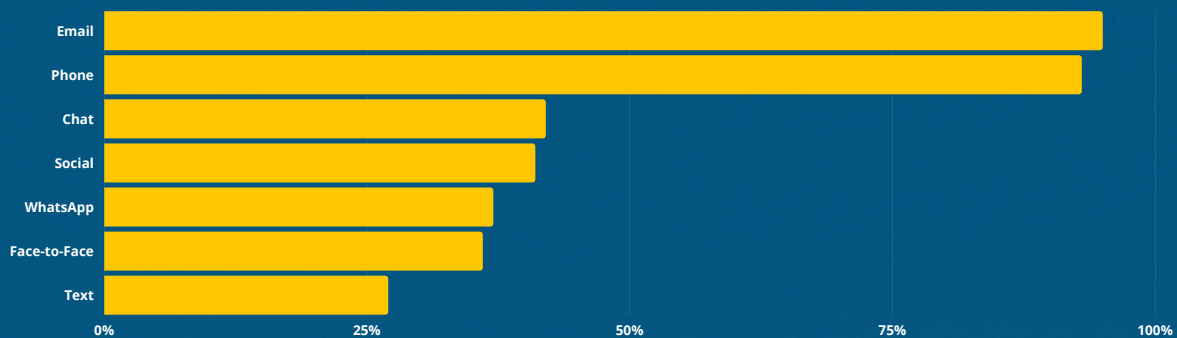
Incorporating new communication channels is a great way for companies to reach customers where they're most active. A majority of customers are already using chat and messaging channels to communicate with their personal network, and they expect the same options from brands they do business with. An outside report shows that approximately two-thirds of people expect businesses to communicate with them over messaging apps.[3] It's about being available wherever, whenever.

While traditional channels will likely always be the foundation of many communication strategies, chat and messaging technologies are providing quick information and resolutions customers are looking for. According to our survey, 32% of businesses would like to have chat as a customer communication channel, and a combined 54% of respondents also anticipate adding newer messaging channels like WhatsApp and social into their mix.

What new customer communication channels would you like to have?

Channel	
Chat	
Social	
WhatsApp	
Text	

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%

This is for good reason. Businesses who use chat and other messaging channels in their operations typically see immediate benefits. The most advantageous being faster problem resolution of customer issues, better sales, fewer expenses, and happy, loyal customers.

Businesses Eye Non-Traditional Conversation Channels (continued)

1. **First Contact Resolution.** Messaging platforms can help boost KPIs. Whether it's a customer initiating a chat request or an agent proactively starting the conversation, messaging and chat software offers great first contact resolution response through digital troubleshooting and sharing page links to self-help articles or landing pages that resolve the customer's issue or inquiry.

2. **Increase Conversions and Sales.** Introducing chat and messaging channels to your website is an effective means for driving revenue. The chat box allows agents to communicate with customers about the product or service value, which can help a contact convert. Without chat technology in your contact center, businesses could miss out on 53% of revenue opportunities.[4]

3. **Reduced Expenses.** Companies can save up to 30% on expenses with chat and messaging services.[5] Agents can multi-task and assist several customers at one time. This efficiency is called chat concurrency and can help businesses save money on payroll costs. Experienced agents can interact with as many as six customers simultaneously.[6]

4. **Improved Customer Service and Loyalty.** Customers feel an elevated level of confidence when doing business with a brand that makes support services easy and effortless. Live Chat's convenience and swift response time makes it a more customer-satisfying channel at 73%, compared to traditional mediums like email (61%) and phone (44%).[7] This type of functionality helps build rapport, so they'll be customers for life!

"It's all about making customers happier. **Valuing their time** is the most important thing a company can provide when it comes to customer service,"

says Sofia Rossato, CEO of SnapEngage.

"Messaging, including chat, provides customers with the immediate and real-time resolutions they're looking for, while also helping businesses lower cost and increase scale."
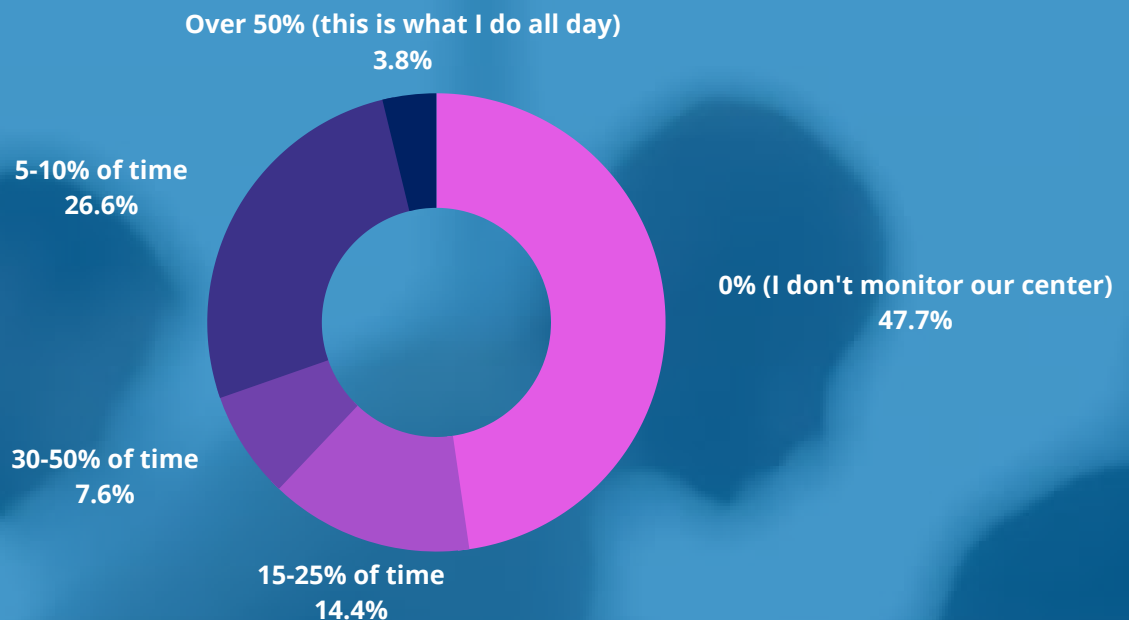
Analytics & Automated Workflows Go Underutilized

As businesses add new communication channels to meet growing customer needs, many seem to underestimate what it will take to successfully manage the increase in customer interactions - and data - that immediately follow.

To ensure going omnichannel is a successful endeavor, customer service teams will need to dedicate time and resources towards monitoring performance and analytics, while also creating and adopting internal workflows that optimize the workload for their agents.

Our survey showed there is work to be done in this category. While a majority of respondents shared their business interest **to add** new channels, 48% of respondents admitted to not currently monitoring team performance at all.

What percent of time do you spend reviewing team performance?

Over 50% (this is what I do all day)
3.8%

5-10% of time
26.6%

0% (I don't monitor our center)
47.7%

30-50% of time
7.6%

15-25% of time
14.4%

Even though customer service managers are frequently pulled in many different directions — managing agents, directly interacting with customers, or dealing with day-to-day operations — having a deep understanding of how your team is performing is one area your business can't afford to shortcut on.

Contact center software can help teams work smarter by measuring certain service-level metrics and agent productivity. Example KPIs include:

- **Service Level.** The percentage of calls answered within a defined amount of time.
- **Average Wait Time.** The average combined time a caller is waiting, including the time it takes an agent to answer the phone and the amount of time a caller is on hold.
- **Average Speed of Answer.** The average amount of time it takes for an agent to answer a call.
- **First Call Resolution.** The percentage of calls that resolve the customer's issue within the first point of contact.

Lack of Confidence in Existing Data & Processes

Our survey also uncovered another area businesses should evaluate before adding new communication channels — auditing existing feedback processes. While some businesses report having customer feedback processes currently in place, shockingly, 72% of them admitted their data was somewhat or not accurate at all.

How would you rate your current feedback?

Very Accurate	(~29%)
Not Accurate	(~31%)
Somewhat Accurate	(~41%)

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%
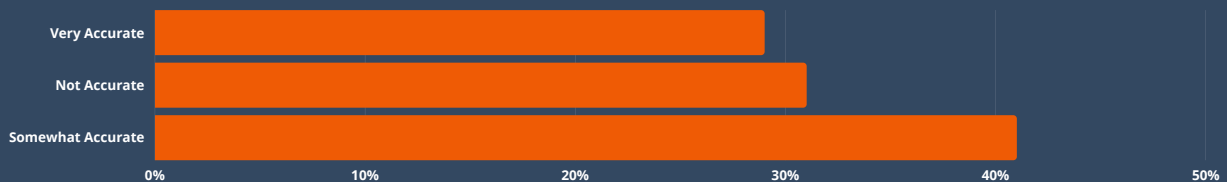
In order to make important business decisions, managers need to trust the data. Successful teams know not to "set it and forget it," but instead meet with their teams frequently to evaluate current feedback processes and identify where updates might be required.

Human error can oftentimes lead to inaccurate metrics, causing managers not to trust the data. Customer service teams are tasked with a myriad of responsibilities, including a significant amount of time dedicated to manually inserting notes after each call or interaction. This can result in agents being rushed and making small mistakes like leaving out critical information or incorrectly tagging items altogether.

Contact center software helps remove the tedious work for agents by integrating essential business technologies, like CRM or Helpdesk, together and automatically logging customer activities. Your agents will receive more time back in their day, and your customers will quickly benefit from reduced wait times and faster resolutions!

Increased Need for Automation Fueled by COVID-19

COVID-19 has not only condensed timelines for businesses to go omnichannel, but it's also squeezed resources in a time where the demand for customer communication has increased. Businesses are now having to find creative ways to do more work with less, and the need for automation has never been more important.
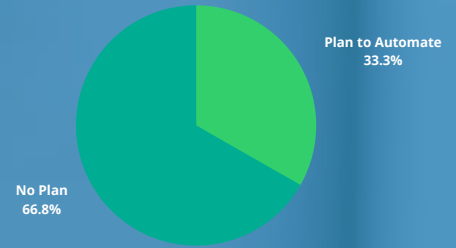
False
33%

True
67%

False
39%

True
61%

Plan to Automate
33.3%

No Plan
66.8%
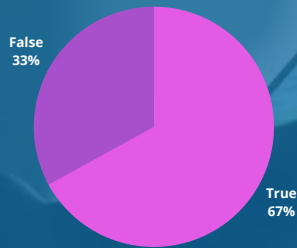
**Has your budget allotment
changed due to COVID-19?**
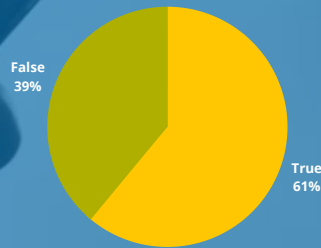
**Has your service volume
changed due to COVID-19?**

**Do you plan to automate
in the next 12 months?**

Of the businesses surveyed where budgets were constrained due to COVID-19, only 45% reported having any form of automation currently in place.

And while 70% of respondents were quick to identify an overall need for automation, only 33% said they intended to do so.

Automating manual tasks like CRM data entry or customer surveys will be critical for businesses that aim to provide superior customer service. By optimizing your inbound and outbound support teams' time, they'll be able to remove tedious busy work and prioritize what matters most — the customer.

Contact center software provides customer support teams with a convenient, affordable solution that can remove many of the operational tasks that often slow down omnichannel progress. Implementing simple automation through this technology can be the difference between minutes or hours of your team's time.

Immediate benefits include:

- **Getting the reports to the right teams at the right time.** Simple functionality like scheduled reports can eliminate the physical task of pulling reports and instead, having them delivered on the day you want, in the format you prefer.
- **Removing manual activity logging with integrations.** As mentioned earlier, connecting your contact center software with other essential technologies your business relies on (like CRM or Helpdesk) can quickly remove manual activity logging for your agents. By reducing human error, you'll also feel more confident in the data you're analyzing.
- **Easily monitoring team performance and customer interactions.** Other features like call monitoring can help you track qualitative metrics as well as monitor calls in real-time, enabling your managers to provide same-side feedback to their agents to improve performance and overall customer satisfaction.

A Final Note

If executed properly, channel adoption is an excellent way to ensure customer satisfaction, plus increased loyalty and revenue for your business over time.

As timelines are shortened and resources thinned, our survey makes it clear that business leaders should take a hard look at how they currently (or plan to) collect customer data and monitor their team's performance. To keep your customer satisfaction at an all-time high, customer service teams will need to anticipate and plan for an increase in conversational data that will inevitably follow new channel adoptions. Optimizing your team's time by automating manual work, and feeling confident about the customer data that you're collecting, will be critical for success.

The businesses that do this right will be the ones that rise to the top.

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Ready to optimize how you communicate with customers?

Whether you're looking to automate how you track customer interactions or better monitor your support team's performance, AVOXI can help. Start your free 7-day trial of our industry-leading Cloud Contact Center platform today.

START FREE TRIAL

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