



**Customer Experience
Requirements Have
Changed, Are You
Prepared to Give Them
What They Want?**



How CCaaS Can Help You Meet, Exceed and Prepare for New Consumer Expectations

One undeniable outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is that customer expectations have changed. When consumers shifted to spending the majority of their time at home, their customer service expectations shifted as well, prompting demand for real-time, customized, in-home experiences that rivaled or exceeded what was previously the norm. Add to that the reality that at-home consumers were tied to social media more than ever before, and the stakes became even higher, as the slightest slip in service delivery could – and often did – result in negative online reviews. In order to stay in business, companies were forced to re-think, re-model, and even re-invent the way in which they provided goods and services.

Research studies show that customer expectations are at an all-time high, with 80% of respondents¹ saying that they believe the experience a company provides is as important as the products or services they sell. With expectations this elevated, companies must ensure that they can offer an experience that is not only responsive but highly personalized.

One of the most important ways that companies can personalize their customer experience is by offering the customer interactions and services on their own terms. When surveyed, 98% of customers² would prefer not to have to interact directly with a person. Instead, customers prefer being able to choose from myriad interactive, personalized, and interconnected options which all offer a consistent experience across departments.

While expectations continue to remain high, we are seeing changes in customer interaction preferences. It's predicted that by 2022, 85% of customers³ will prefer a self-service customer service model, if that option is available. That figure has risen by more than 35% in the last five years, showing that this is an increasingly desirable option.

All these changes in consumer expectations boil down to one clear mandate: Your tried and true methods of working with customers MUST change. Below, we'll take a deeper look at how customer experience requirements have transformed over the last several years and demonstrate how organizations can prepare themselves to handle these incoming changes by optimizing their resources and technology to better serve their needs.

How Does the Customer Experience Look Different Today?

When we look at the expectations that many customers have of their ideal experience, it may feel like a lot to live up to. Essentially, customers expect that they will be able to reach out to a company at any time and receive empathetic and personal engagement, regardless of the contact method or channel they use.

Let's delve into each of these expectations and show how they can work together to create a blueprint for communication and customer experience strategy for all businesses.

Omnichannel Preferences

As we move to the new normal, we're seeing in stark terms just how important omnichannel servicing is to businesses. Instead of sticking to one or two interactive platforms, customers expect businesses to offer a variety of channels that can all be used interchangeably.

Customers also expect that they will be able to travel seamlessly between channels without a break in experience. For example, a customer may start an interaction over live chat or text, but would then need to be able to switch to a phone call if necessary, without having to explain their needs all over again to a new agent.

Personalized Treatment

When interacting with your business, customers have come to expect a high level of personalization, especially when they have to interact with a human. 66% of customers⁴ surveyed recently by Salesforce expect that businesses will understand their unique needs and expectations.

If these expectations are met, businesses could see immediate rewards – 49% of buyers⁵ have made impulse purchases when they've been offered a more personalized customer experience.

High Expectations for Efficiency and Speed

Along with personalization comes higher expectations for fast, efficient interactions, regardless of which contact method customers choose. If your business is able to meet these expectations, it can lead to increased customer retention – and even greater sales. One study found that good customer experiences lead to a spending increase of more than 140%⁶ when compared to those who had a poor experience.

What Does This Mean for the Contact Center?

Instead of relying on cookie-cutter solutions, contact centers must adopt an integrated plan to ensure they're offering efficient, personalized service at every touchpoint. For many businesses, this means creating new strategies and investing in new technologies and solutions that prioritize omnichannel communications.

By enhancing your communication through these new tools, you can ensure a reliable, secure, and personalized customer experience that improves ROI in every facet of your organization.

On a more granular level, here's what some of these changes might look like:

Managing New Traffic Through Digital Channels

During COVID-19, the expectation from 88% of customers⁷ was that businesses would accelerate their digital initiatives to meet the current moment. If that wasn't something that your company did, now is the time to revise your strategy. Businesses that are not leveraging new tools like chatbots or live chat tools to manage increased digital traffic will quickly find themselves falling behind.

Leveraging Customer Data to Improve the Customer Experience

The increased call and contact volume during the COVID-19 pandemic has generated a wealth of customer data. Is your business prepared to use this data to improve its customer experience?

Businesses that are not actively tracking this data and making use of it through AI and machine learning are letting an incredibly valuable asset slip through their fingers. One great example is MedWhat⁸, a company that has developed a chatbot that can help diagnose illnesses and provide treatment options with greater accuracy through machine learning.

How to Use Technology to Support the Evolution of Your Customer Service

The best way to improve your customer experience and holistically improve contact center performance is to embrace Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS), an all-in-one platform in the cloud.

Within CCaaS, there are a variety of technologies that can support the evolution of your customer experience – available through the unified, cloud-based platform.

Spectrotel's CCaaS solutions offer the following features to help contact centers try to meet these new customer expectations.

Automation, Chatbots, and AI

Robust CCaaS solutions are poised to take a large volume of work off your staff by automating customer service interactions through AI. When your company is fielding a large volume of requests, your system can provide intelligent call routing and ticketing that makes it easier for customers to find a satisfactory resolution to their issues. Plus, AI-enabled chatbots offer digital-first customers the chance to have their issues resolved without talking to a person.

Omnichannel Routing

Great contact center omnichannel routing is essential to ensure that customers are served in a timely manner without overloading your agents. Without it, it's easy for backlogs in certain channels to build up, causing delays and increasing the overall wait time.

Contact Center Analytics

With the enormous volume of customer data coming through, contact center analytics can help you use it to better understand your customers' needs so you can offer increased personalization. Analytics improve your customers' experience while cutting down on work for your agents and staff.

Workforce Engagement Solutions

Being unable to offer a great customer experience is as frustrating to your staff as it is to your customers. With workforce engagement solutions, you can make smarter and more efficient employee planning and scheduling choices. Workforce engagement tools like assistance and task management, metrics and recognition, and evaluation and improvement support the entire agent employment life cycle. Agents feel as though they have more autonomy and flexibility – reducing agent turnover and improving your contact center's overall working environment.

As an additional bonus, CCaaS solutions allow you to deploy the exact features and solutions that will benefit your unique contact center so you can pursue the most cost-effective options for your business.

Sources:

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Work With a CCaaS Expert to Leverage the Right Solution

With all the CCaaS options out there, it's daunting to start thinking about a move to the cloud, especially if your internal IT team is already busy handling other day-to-day needs.

To choose the right partner and achieve the best results, it's important to stay laser-focused on what you want to achieve. We suggest making a list of your most critical desired results as a start. Make sure to include those features that are “table stakes” – ones that are crucial to ensuring successful outcomes. If you use this “wish list” a base to drive your evaluations, you'll make the right choice for your organization.

This is the foundation of the process we use to help our customers every day. If you'd like to hear more about our custom-crafted approach to communications solutions, **get in touch with us today** to learn more about how we can work together to improve your customer experience. We can help you sift through the options with none of the organizational hassle of doing it on your own.

