

White Paper

Five Key Trends Impacting Customer Service



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As we head into 2020, now is the perfect time to evaluate how the customer service sector has performed in 2019. And what better way of doing this than exploring the 2019-20 Contact Babel UK Contact Centre Decision-Makers' Guide, sponsored by Enghouse Interactive. Based on a detailed structured questionnaire, Contact Babel surveyed 226 UK contact centre managers and directors on performance, operations and industry trends to name but a few. The final report contains a wealth of information on the contact centre industry and identifies major pain points that affect the sector, but more importantly, it offers specific solutions that can be used to solve these issues.

There are some fantastic stats contained within the 414 pages of the Decision Makers Guide so we thought we would highlight five of the key trends running through the report.



The world is becoming increasingly digital

42%

The average cost of an inbound call is 16% more than an email, 34% more than web chat and 42% more than a social media interaction

One in four interactions is now digital, which can bring a variety of benefits for consumers and businesses.

Firstly, digital communication is generally cheaper. For example, the average cost of an inbound call is £4.53, 16% more than an email, 34% more than web chat and 42% more than a social media interaction. Although the cost of digital interactions is on the rise: with email up from £3.37 on average in 2018 to £3.89 in 2019 and social media up from £3.07 per contact to £3.18 respectively.

Most organisations who were polled expect digital channels to continue increasing in importance. Strong growth is once again expected in web chat and social media customer service interactions and SMS, with email volumes also expected to grow but at a slower rate than in previous years. At the same time, more organisations (62%) expect the live telephony channel volumes to fall than to rise (15%).

37%

Only 12% of customers that want to get in touch with a company choose calling as their first option, 37% prefer email and 14% would visit a website first.

Secondly, consumers generally prefer digital communications to speaking to an agent on the phone. Only 12% of customers that want to get in touch with a company choose calling as their first option, 37% prefer email and 14% would visit a website first.



AI is becoming mainstream

94%

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AI can assist and empower agents in a number of ways. For example, AI-based technology can automatically scan incoming digital interactions and present agents with recommended answers and information to address the customers' enquiry. Algorithms can be trained to understand unfamiliar language, technical terms or slang that agents may struggle with. Similarly, AI can be used to automatically analyse factors such as context and emotion, enabling agents to provide personalised, empathetic replies more easily.

In fact, 16% of respondents in Contact Babel's report say they're already using AI and 31% are intending to implement it within 12 months. If you haven't done so already now is the time to plan for AI and understand how it will sit alongside your agents.



Metrics are maturing

37%

of those polled by Contact Babel chose CSAT/NPS as the most important metric that they used.

As customer service has become more business-critical, the way it is being measured has evolved and matured. Rather than focusing on simple metrics such as call time, more and more firms in the industry are embracing measures such as CSAT and NPS. 37% of those polled by Contact Babel chose CSAT/NPS as the most important metric that they used.

NPS is very useful but only takes you so far. For example, it can tell you what customers think and feel at a specific moment, but not why they think or act the way they do. Generally, you have to guess the reasons behind the numbers, which limits opportunities for analysis.

Ideally, you want to build on what you can learn from the NPS with more granular customer insights to reveal why your score is moving in a particular direction. To do this you need to analyse all customer interactions, including those from traditional Voice of the Customer (VoC) surveys, along with verbatim information from email, chat and social media conversations.

By analysing what customers actually say in conversations you can extract qualitative insight that enables you to continually improve.



Self-service is growing

87%

No surprise then that 87% of companies now offer some form of self-service, 62% of which is web self-service and 46% account specific where a customer needs to login.

70%

of companies agree to some extent that some customers simply don't trust self-service

Consumers have more and more queries and want faster answers, particularly to routine requests. No surprise then that 87% of companies now offer some form of self-service, 62% of which is web self-service and 46% account specific where a customer needs to login.

However, there are occasions when self-service is not enough for a customer, so you need to offer a wide range of options. For example, 70% of companies agree to some extent that some customers simply don't trust self-service, preferring to have human reassurance that the request they have made has been carried out, or that the information they are looking for is actually correct.

Of course, simply offering web self-service is just the start. You need to constantly improve the knowledge base, fill in gaps and learn from the questions people ask if you want to keep pace with consumer expectations.



The rise of web chat

44%

We found that 44% of brands evaluated claimed to offer it – yet just 26% had it operational when tested.

Web chat is continuing to grow, especially in retail. Generally, consumers like chat partly because it is immediate – with typical wait times often less than queuing to get through on the phone, and also because it gives a direct, real-time human contact.

The problem is, however, that many companies tend to drop chat when resources are tight. In a recent Digital CX study carried out by Enghouse Company, Eptica, we found that 44% of brands evaluated claimed to offer it – yet just 26% had it operational when tested. If you are providing chat you need to ensure it has the right resources in place to maximise its potential and to avoid disappointing your customers.

Moving into 2020 it is important to understand the changing face of customer service and to plan and resource accordingly. You'll have to focus on achieving a balance between investing in the right people, training, tech and processes to keep customers satisfied and drive engagement and loyalty moving forward.

Download the 2019/2020 Contact Babel Decision Maker's Guide for a more in-depth view of how the contact centre industry is performing.



Let us help you increase quality in your business, retain your customers and grow!

About Enghouse Interactive

We are the world's most **reliable** contact center technology provider. Our global brand is built on our track-record of consistently honoring our commitments – to our customers, our staff and our shareholders.

Enghouse Interactive, a subsidiary of **Enghouse Systems Limited** (TSX: ENGH), is a leading global provider of contact center software and service solutions that deliver enhanced customer service and transform the contact center from a cost center into a powerful growth engine. Our Practices and Solutions enable businesses to leverage meaningful, daily customer interactions to extract key insights used to deepen customer loyalty and uncover new opportunities to add value, profitably.

Supporting over 10,000 customers, in 120+ countries, **Enghouse Interactive** works within any local regulatory environment and supports any telephony technology, whether deployed on premises or in the Cloud, ensuring that our customers can be reached by their customers – anytime, anywhere, and via any channel.



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