



The Need for Speed

Why companies need to deliver fast,
consolidated customer service.

Executive Summary



The way we interact with customer service teams has never been more important. This is often the only time we ever interact with a company, and our opinion of a customer service team often forms our opinion of the company itself.

We all rate a company based on how quickly they can respond to us, how well they answer our queries and how helpful the person we speak to is.

We have more channels than ever at our fingertips to contact customer service teams, from the phone, to social media, email or webchat. In theory, it has never been easier and quicker to get in touch with a business.

But this plethora of communications channels also means raised expectations. Today more than ever, customers expect to be able to reach a company quickly.

They expect the agent to be knowledgeable and to be able to answer their query the first time.

We've all been at the receiving end of slow customer service and know how frustrating it can be.

This paper explores how important speed is in delivering an amazing customer experience today, and what is making customers lose patience.

It reveals that speed is everything—consumers have little patience for slow service and, when frustrated, won't hesitate to take their business elsewhere.

At 8x8, we believe that having the right technology in place is vital to delivering fast, high quality service.

This means not only connecting all customer communications channels into one platform, but also linking up internal communications channels with the contact centre so that agents have instant access to the right experts internally.

The companies that get this right will not only meet their customers' expectations but exceed them, giving them the edge in attracting and retaining business.

Enjoy reading the paper and I'd love to hear how you are improving the customer experience in your organisation.

Mary Ellen Genovese, Managing Director of European Operations at 8x8

Methodology

To create this paper, 8x8 commissioned independent market research company Censuswide to interview a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults.

Unless otherwise stated, all statistics referenced relate to this survey.

Each respondent was asked to complete an in-depth questionnaire about their experience of contacting a company's customer service team.

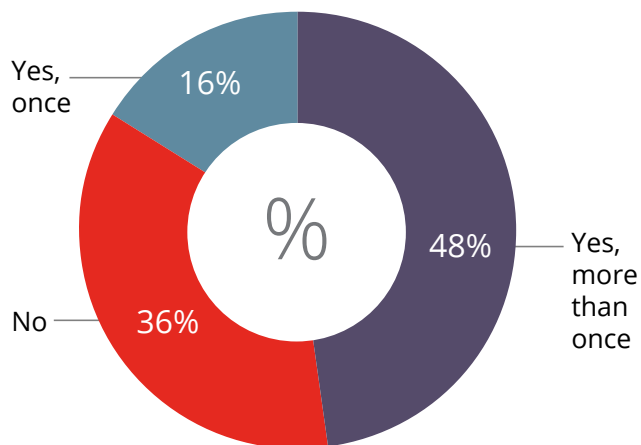


Why Speed Matters

The time it takes to get through to a company, or get a response, is a key pain point for consumers in the UK.

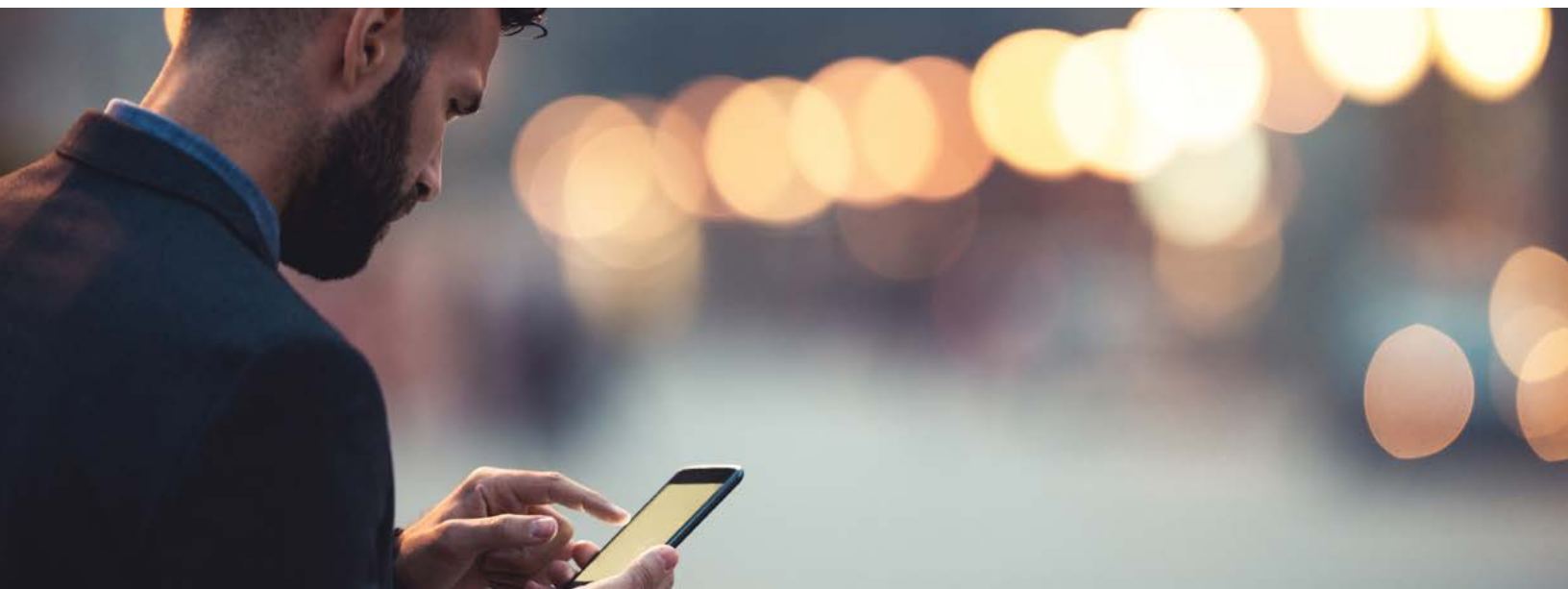
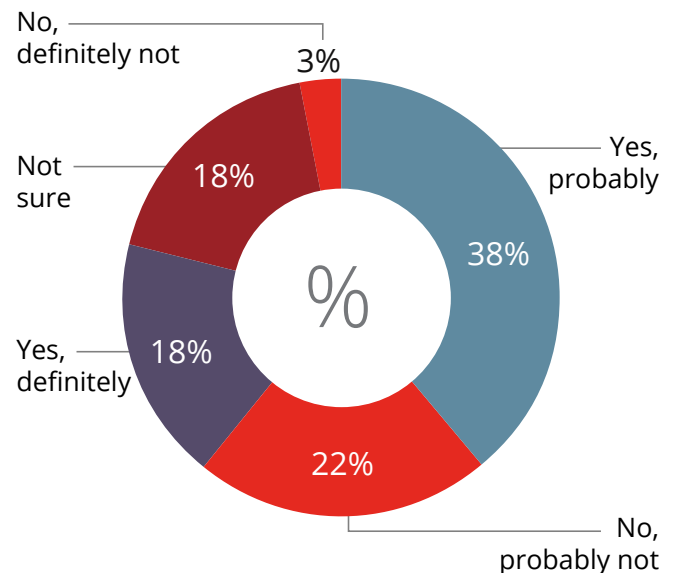
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of people say they have been frustrated at the length of time it has taken a customer service team at a company to solve a problem.

Have you ever been frustrated by the time it has taken a customer service team at a company to solve your problem / answer your query?



This frustration is driving the majority to vote with their feet. Over half (56%) say they would stop shopping with a brand if they experienced slow customer service.

Would you stop shopping with a business or using its services if you experienced slow customer service from the business?

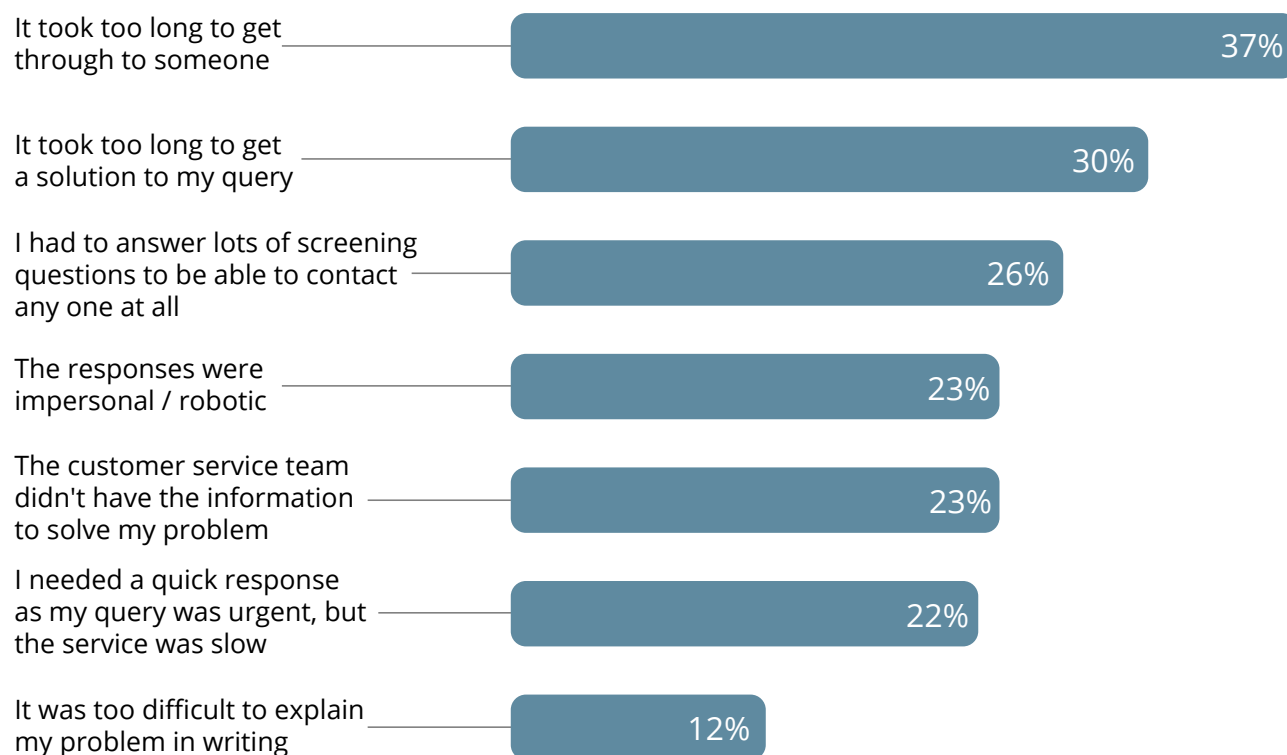


Customers are quick to lose patience when service isn't quick.

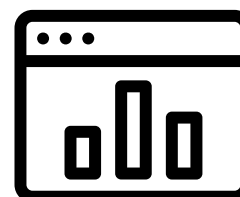
The time it took to get through to someone is the most common reason customers lose patience with a customer service team, followed by having to wait for a long time to get their query resolved.

Many also said that they were forced to wade through lots of screening questions just to be able to access contact information—for example, answering a series of FAQs.

Why did you lose patience with communications channels you selected? (Tick all that apply)



Contact centre technology with advanced analytics allows companies to pinpoint bottlenecks and plan resources effectively



The Industries Most Affected

The research also reveals a correlation between the type of company a customer is dealing with and their likelihood to lose patience.

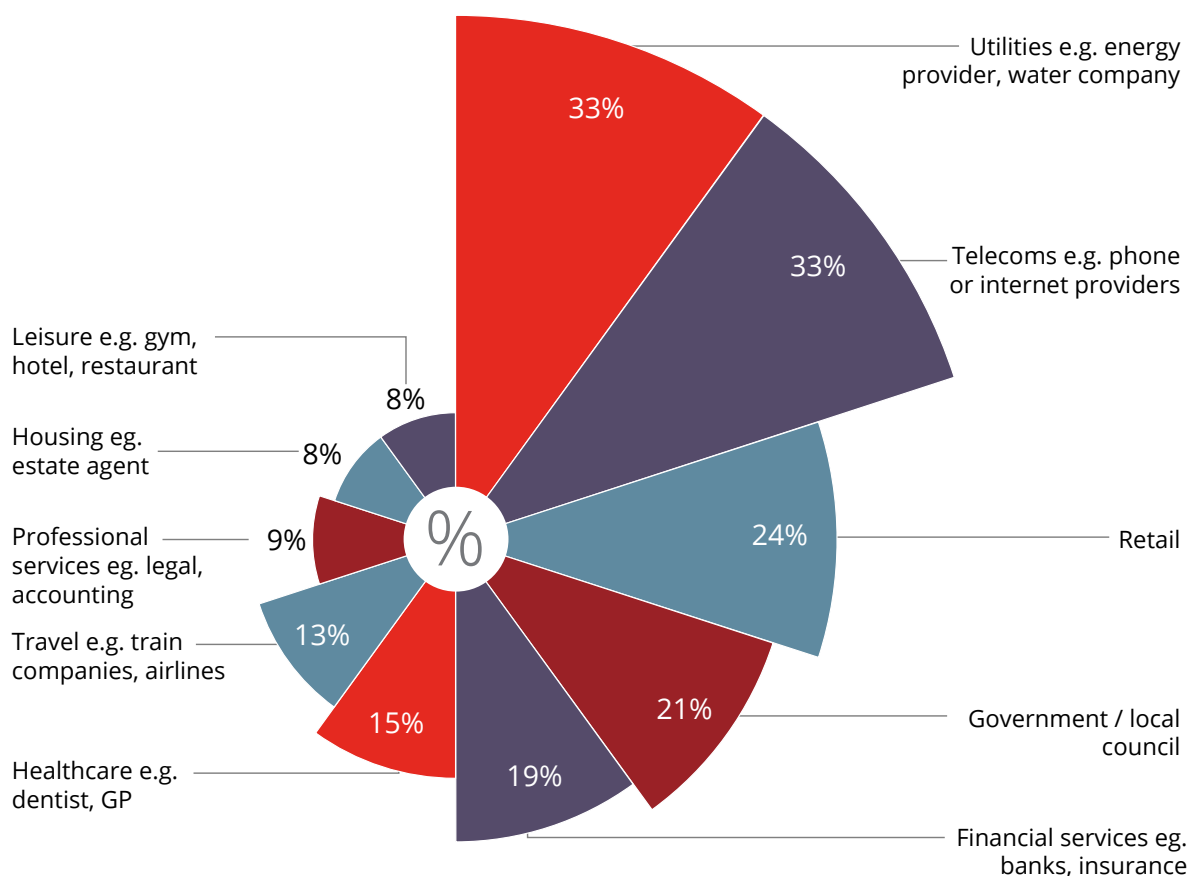
Customers are most likely to lose patience with utilities and telecom firms for slow service (33%), followed by retail (24%), and local government (21%).

This means that the speed at which customers

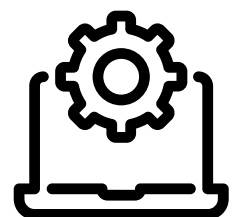
expect a response from these organisations is not living up to their expectations. This could indicate that these companies are either responding to customers more slowly than those in other sectors, or customer expectations for these sectors are higher than others.

This suggests that organisations in these sectors are at the greatest risk of losing customers to slow service.

Thinking of the times you have been frustrated by slow customer service, which type of business have you been most likely to lose patience with? (Tick up to three)



With a cloud-based platform, agents have the tools to resolve a query in one interaction, drawing on expertise from across the organisation



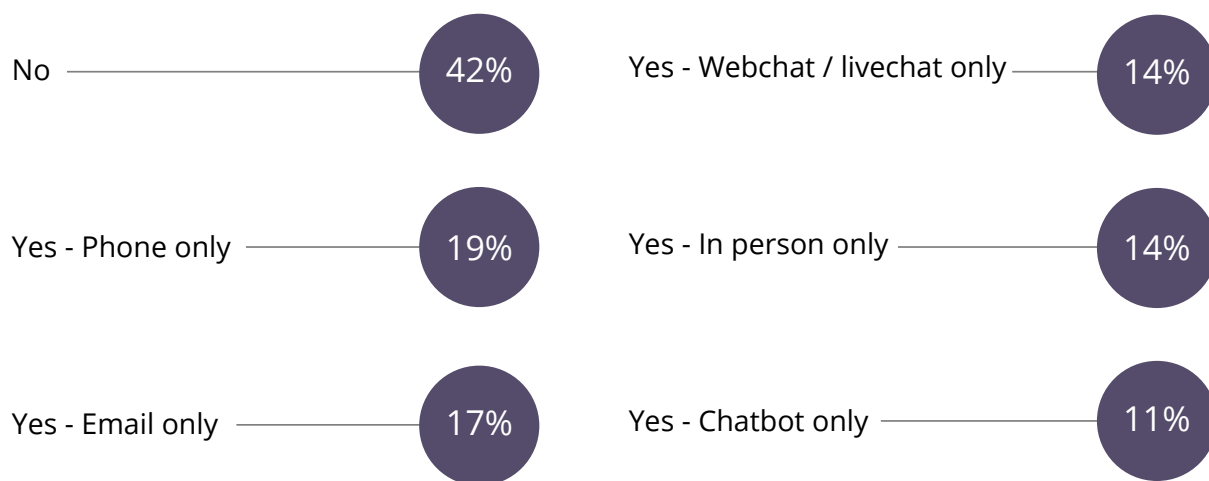
The Importance of a Multi-Channel Strategy

Choice is key. Having multiple channels in place is vital for customers, and they won't tolerate businesses that don't have these options in place.

78% of UK adults expect companies to provide access to their customer service team via multiple channels, such as phone, email, webchat and social media.

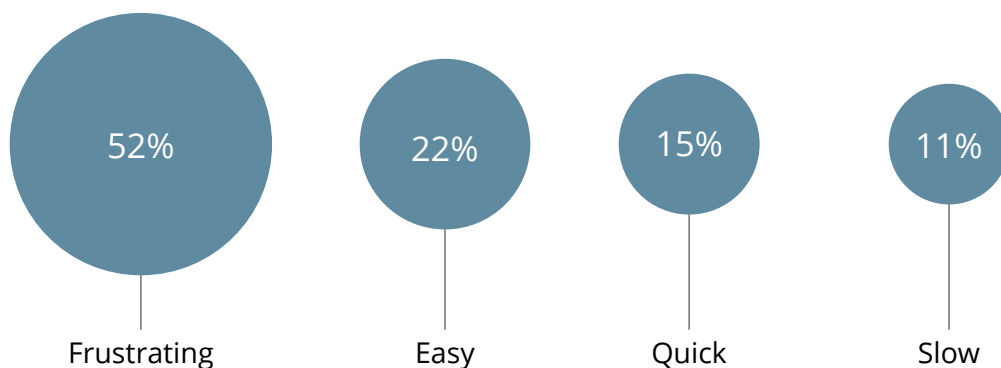
Yet it is still common for companies to only offer their customers a single channel with which to contact them. One in five customers (19%) say they've dealt with a company that only offered a phone number, and 11% have tried to contact a company that only offered webchat.

Have you ever tried to contact a company that only offered you a single way to contact its customer service team? (Tick all that apply)



This lack of choice means 52% of UK customers say dealing with a company that only has one communication channel was frustrating. Speed is also a consideration, as 11% say the customer service at these organisations was slow.

Thinking about the company which only had one customer service channel, what was your experience when you tried to contact them? If there has been more than one, think about the most recent example.



One cloud-based platform makes it easy to bring multiple channels together to answer queries more quickly





How Technology is Supercharging Customer Service Agents

Cloud communications technology is giving companies the tools to meet customer expectations for fast, consolidated service.

8x8 X Series is the only technology helping businesses transform their customer and employee experience with one system of engagement across voice, video, collaboration and contact centre solutions, and one system of intelligence on one cloud-based technology platform. This enables businesses to boost employee productivity and improve service for customers.

With one platform, customer queries can be resolved on the first interaction. Agents are provided with the full context behind a customer's call and with one platform integrating telephony,

meetings and team messaging, they can also contact any expert in the organisation to get a fast resolution.

Advanced customer journey analytics allow contact centre staff to pinpoint potential bottlenecks and plan staffing accordingly, meaning customers never experience a drop in service levels.

For staff, one cloud-based platform means easy-to-use tech. This means dealing with inbound customer queries is no longer complex but a smooth process resulting in happy and efficient staff.

Case Study: DDC OS

With 8x8 X Series in place, business process outsourcing specialist DDC OS is now able to gather full insight into the customer journey. The company's schedules are based on call volumes and service levels, and by integrating 8x8 with its workforce management tool, DDC has been able to track and measure the adherence to these schedules, which has increased from 80% to 96%.

Previously, high service costs were an issue for the business. With 8x8 in place, DDC OS has reduced its costs by around 35%—a massive transformation for the company.

Chrissie Spencer, head of group marketing for The DDC Group, said, "As a company, 8x8 is very agile, very flexible, and very enthusiastic to work with us to help ensure that we're continually providing a great service to our clients. It's just a wonderful relationship. The 8x8 solutions enable us to bring everything together into a single dashboard, connecting the dots between all the disparate pieces of information that we have in constant motion. Having the robust communications capability that 8x8 offers is vital to DDC OS. It's our lifeblood; it's what we do. If we didn't have what 8x8 gives us, we simply wouldn't have a business."





The Bottom Line

Speed is everything for consumers contacting customer service teams today.

But contact centre agents can't do it alone. To be able to deliver a fast, high quality experience for customers, agents need the right technology in place to supercharge staff and empower them to delight customers every time.

A cloud communications platform like 8x8 X Series is vital to enable businesses to deliver a fast, excellent experience for customers, every time.



8x8, Inc. cloud solutions help businesses transform their customer and employee experience. With one system of engagement for voice, video, chat and contact center and one system of intelligence on one technology platform, businesses can now communicate faster and smarter to exceed the speed of customer expectations.

For additional information, visit www.8x8.com/uk, or contact our experts on 0333 043 8888

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