

# Customer Happiness Benchmark Report



# How Do You Measure Customer Happiness If You Don't Know What It's Like?

Quite frequently, brands ask us how they compare to their peers in the industry with respect to customer service. This customer happiness report is the answer to that lingering question. It is only a natural need for businesses to compare themselves with others in order to have a context to measuring their own performance. With this report, you are now empowered with data to benchmark your customer satisfaction and distinguish your customers' experience from the rest of your peers in the industry.

In this report, you will find —

## Cross-industry benchmarks

The most important metrics across 38 industries we serve. With the help of our Data Science team, we dive into the specifics of each of the metrics that are unique to each industry. From FCR (first call resolution) to CSAT (customer satisfaction), it's all in here.

## Region-specific breakdowns

We have taken a similar approach (cross-industry benchmarking) to tackle customer support data across regions. One of the insights we found is that the metrics varied across countries which we will be discussing in the upcoming sections.

## Adoption of helpdesk software

This is one of the key elements we've noticed that most companies fail to factor in when benchmarking themselves to other companies or in the industry. When we analyzed the data, we saw a significant difference in the metrics of those companies that automated\* most of their support using a [helpdesk software](#) and those that didn't.

Using this information, you will be able to set and plan your customer service goals for the year ahead. You will also be able to compare the results with other companies in the same industry and identify key areas where you can improve your service.

\* [Automation features](#) considered are Dispatch'r, Scenario Automations, Round robin based ticket assignment.

# So, How Did We Go About Making Sense of All This Data?

We looked at anonymized user data of our customers including:

- Data from the previous year
- Data from outside of Freshdesk
- Support interactions of approximately 7000 companies
- Support interactions across 38 industries

\*For the report, we used data of users who receive more than 300 tickets a month.

## Here Are The Top Customer Service Metrics

In this section, we walk you through the top five support metrics — customer satisfaction (CSAT), first response rate, resolution SLA, one-touch resolution, and number of responses to resolution. We highlight benchmarks of each of these metrics to compare your support data against.



### One-touch resolution

The one-touch resolution or the first call resolution (FCR) tells you how many tickets on an average have been resolved with the first response itself. This metric is important because it helps you understand the complexity of the issues that you are receiving and how you can optimize your self-service support tools to resolve issues faster. FCR also implies that your customers' waiting time is lesser and customer satisfaction is better.

**71%**

We saw that 71% of the tickets were resolved with one response. We noticed that larger hospitals and healthcare companies have the highest percentage of FCR which is 83%. Banks, on the other hand, have the least percentage of FCR which is 55%. Based on the size of the industry, we also see that there isn't a lot of difference in the FCR percentage between SMBs (71%) and enterprise-sized companies (73%).



## First Response Rate

The average first response time is the time taken on an average for a support agent to respond to the customer. This has a significant impact on how your customers rate you and how your company scores on customer satisfaction.

**7** hours

Our research shows that agents responded to customers in the first 7 hours of receiving a support ticket. Some of the industries that have the least first response time are holding companies, manufacturing - computer hardware which are at 4 hours. This means there is plenty of room for improvement for this metric.



## Resolution SLA

Every company has a service level agreement that promises its customers that their issues with the product will be resolved within a specific period of time. This may differ from one company to another.

**86%**

We found that 86% of the tickets were resolved well within SLA. We also noticed that the enterprise-sized industrial manufacturing & services industry has the highest resolution SLA — 91% of their tickets are resolved within SLA.



## Number of responses to resolution

How many responses does it take for a support agent to resolve a customer issue? We noticed that it takes an average of just 1 response from an agent to resolve a ticket.

**1**  
response

We found that this has to do with omni-channel support. This feature allows support agents to have context and be well-informed about the customer issue. Additionally, Freshdesk helps companies set up strong self-service tools that speed up ticket resolution.



## Customer Satisfaction

The customer satisfaction score tells you how customers across industries have rated their experience. This is one of the most important metrics that you need to have your eyes on at all times.

# 78%

An increase in this score is an indicator that more companies are focused on delivering great service and experience to their customers. Our data showed that 78% of customers rated their experience, with a brand that uses Freshdesk, as happy.

Make sure your score isn't any lower than 78%!

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## TELETRAC NAVMAN



*“With Freshdesk, we all can easily access the information we need to know where to focus and deliver top-notch customer support.”*

*—Garth Cloete, Enterprise Support Manager at Teletrac Navman*

# Key Highlights

## Retail Industry Sees Highest Number of Tickets

Be it SMBs (Small and Medium-sized Businesses) or enterprise businesses, the retail industry sees the maximum number of tickets each month.

*Retail receives an average of up to 4800 tickets per month.*

With a high ticket volume compared to the other industries, retail is a highly competitive industry. Retail customers tend to give up on brand loyalty and switch retailers for better customer experience. And successful retail brands do whatever it takes to wow their customers at every step of their purchase journey. If you are a retailer looking to make your customer experience stand out, here are a few pro tips to get you started.

*Customer experience is the key differentiator for retailers.*

## Pro Tips for Retail Customer Support

Since the retail industry sees a high volume of tickets each day, retailers may not be able to provide the kind of customer experience they would like. The constantly changing customer expectations and new trends in technology make it all the more difficult for retailers to stay relevant. Here are a few best practices we put together to help you ace the support game.

## ✓ Listen before you speak

There is a difference between what your customer is saying and what you think they are saying. In order to provide efficient support, you should listen to understand their query and then help them accordingly. A good helpdesk software will have the **right features** to help you with context such as user details, purchase history, right beside the ticket.

## ✓ Set up self-service tools

Customers prefer to look for answers themselves. You need to ensure that you have necessary information such as return policy, shipping costs, delivery methods, product information, etc. readily available for customers.

## ✓ Optimize your support channels

Though you might be available to customers on multiple support channels, you need to make sure that each of those channels is equally optimized for support. This also means understanding how your customers use each of these channels.

## ✓ Provide personalized customer experience

In the process of responding to customer queries, you can offer them a personalized experience. To do so, you need to have context of what's happening. This not only speeds up your customer support but also helps you deliver a personalized experience to your customer.

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*“We began looking for a new tool in autumn and were keen to get one in place and optimized ahead of the Christmas peak period. Freshdesk ensured that the implementation process was as smooth as possible, and the team were up and running within 48 hours.”*

*—Vaughan Potter, Head of Customer Services at Hamleys*

# Better FCR = Better Customer Satisfaction (Not Always)

Common belief has it that quick response has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and a slow response results in lower customer satisfaction. Our data shows that this is necessarily not the case. For example, the average FCR is 7 hours and the average CSAT is 78% across industries. However, if you look at industries such as computer hardware or industrial manufacturing & services have a longer first response time but the highest customer satisfaction (CSAT).

Industry	Avg. FCR time (hrs)	Avg. CSAT
Computer Hardware	9	89%
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	7	89%
Construction & Building Mat.	6	87%
Government	13	87%
Automotive	8	86%
Civic, Non-Profit	11	86%
Hospitals & Healthcare	7	83%
Insurance	6	81%
Computer Software	6	80%
Energy & Environmental	8	80%
Corporate Services	6	79%
Agriculture & Forestry	11	79%
Food & Beverage	8	79%
Mining & Metals	11	78%
Financial Services	6	77%

Industry	Avg. FCR time (hrs)	Avg. CSAT
Media	6	77%
Electronics	7	74%
Leisure, Sports & Recreation	8	74%
Consumer Services	6	73%
Banks	5	71%
Consumer Products	7	64%
Schools & Education	7	53%
Pharma and Biotech	12	50%
Transportation	6	46%
Real Estate Services	6	45%
Retail	6	43%
Telecommunication	5	42%

Average FCR: 7 hours | Average CSAT: 78%

## Delayed FCR and What You Can Do to Fix It

One of the common reasons for delayed first response time is plenty of tickets come in during non-working hours. Here's what you can do to keep your CSAT from drowning:

- Use a helpdesk software that allows automation so that customer queries are routed to the right/available teams during non-working hours.
- Create canned responses to help you acknowledge customer queries
- Set up and optimize self-service tools
- Make use of AI and bots to answer customer questions

# A quick observation – slow is the new fast

There are a few factors to consider when understanding why this data negates conventional wisdom.

Ever heard the saying, five minutes in heaven isn't the same as five minutes in hell? Well, it's because time is not absolute, it is relative. What seems like a long wait for one customer might not be the case for another. Though customer surveys come back pointing to the importance of time, this isn't a great metric to tie support performance to. The unsung hero is quality service. When a customer says quick service, what they are really implying is quick quality service.

*“70% of complaining customers will continue to do business with you if you resolve their complaint. 95% will continue to do business with you if you resolve the problem immediately.”*

Source

The emphasis on time seems understandable. It is easy to chase speed as a metric because it is easy to measure and manage. But this can lead to poor decisions. In a hurry to get the customer out the door, you risk being rude and incompetent. Hence, resolving customer queries should always be central to your support processes.

# The Ripple Effect of Ticket Volume

Nobody likes a high ticket volume or a long ticket queue because it directly impacts your support team. However, getting a lot of support tickets each day is a good thing. It is an indicator that your support channels are working fine. It also means that you are getting plenty of feedback about your product or service in the form of queries and complaints from customers.

Industry	CSAT	Avg. ticket / agent
Transportation	46%	675
Computer Software	80%	545
Telecommunication	42%	450
Retail	43%	441
Insurance	81%	438
Energy & Environmental	80%	419
Banks	71%	418
Agriculture & Forestry	79%	417
Consumer Services	73%	383
Leisure, Sports & Recreation	74%	381
Industrial Manufacturing & Services	89%	374
Food & Beverage	79%	358
Civic, Non-Profit	86%	343
Construction & Building Mat.	87%	337
Corporate Services	79%	336
Mining & Metals	78%	333
Schools & Education	53%	322

Industry	CSAT	Avg. ticket / agent
Pharma and Biotech	50%	283
Financial Services	77%	227
Government	87%	225
Real Estate Services	45%	222
Computer Hardware	89%	220
Media	77%	220
Hospitals & Healthcare	83%	213
Consumer Products	64%	184
Electronics	74%	175
Automotive	86%	152

**Average CSAT: 78% | Average tickets/agent: 475**

With pressure building on the support agents to handle high ticket volumes, they tend to focus on resolving as many tickets as possible. This results in higher productivity but has a negative effect on customer satisfaction. In the preceding point, we talked about how chasing speed alone can make your support team look inaccurate and incompetent leaving the customer with a sour experience.

When we looked at the data we collected, we saw that with an exception of a few industries such as Computer Software, high ticket resolution has a negative effect on customer satisfaction. For example, in the transportation industry, a support agent resolves an average of 675 tickets each month. However, the least customer satisfaction has been reported by this industry.

# Plan Your Way to Customer Happiness

The secret to managing high ticket volumes is planning. With the right [reporting tools and analytics](#), you will have a clear picture of what you can expect from your ticket queue. Some industries see a consistently high inflow of tickets whereas consumer-focused industries such as retail see spikes during the holiday season. You can plan your resources based on the ticket traffic trends you see.

For example, Amazon begins hiring more people in the third quarter so that it has enough support people to handle the extremely high ticket volumes at the end of the year. You can do something similar, of hiring occasional or temporary agents during peak seasons, if you have the budget for it. Also, Freshdesk offers [‘Day Pass’](#) that will come in handy during such times.

Another way to deal with this problem is to set up and optimize your self-service tools such as knowledge base, forums, online community, etc. These tools will empower customers to resolve issues without needing your assistance. In a recent study done at Freshdesk, we noted that you can deflect 10% of your tickets with self service. With fewer tickets to resolve, your support team will have more time to deal with larger issues.

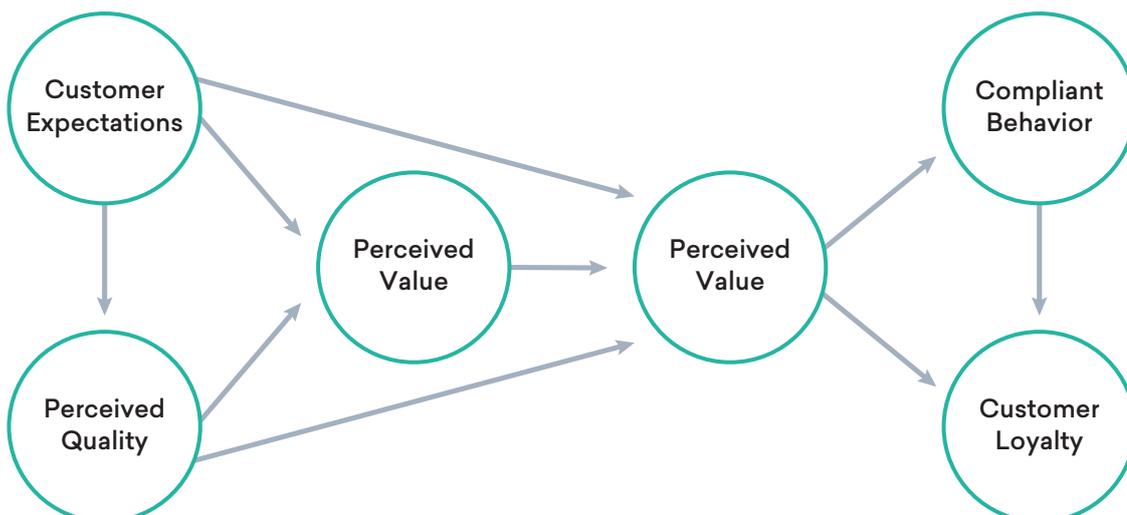
# Does Culture Impact Customer Satisfaction?

The way customer satisfaction index is measured has evolved over the years. We looked at the global customer satisfaction index and how it is measured.



Source: American Customer Satisfaction Index

A few decades ago this is what the model looked like. It was pretty straightforward. Perceived performance and customer expectations affected customer satisfaction. If the customer satisfaction was negative it led to customer complaints and if it was positive, it earned customer loyalty. If you address customer complaints effectively, it can restore customer trust and loyalty.



Source: American Customer Satisfaction Index

Fast forward to the present customer satisfaction index. The shift from performance to value and quality is quite evident in this model. Customer expectations are constantly evolving and the factors that differentiate a good experience from a bad one are also changing.

Businesses these days serve a global and diverse audience. People across different countries and cultures are constantly interacting with each other to purchase, sell, and support each other. Organizations consider the demographics, lifestyle choices, language, and plenty of other factors specific to a region when building products and services.

Consider a simple size chart for clothes — UK has a slightly different size conversion than that of the US or Asia. This approach translates to most of the functions of purchase and post-purchase cycles. However, how customers respond to these approaches and rate their support experience vary across different regions.

Region	Avg. FCR time	Resolution to SLA	FCR	Avg. CSAT
ANZ	7	90%	74%	88%
US	6	91%	73%	88%
UK	6	92%	72%	86%
America	7	89%	71%	85%
MeNA	6	88%	74%	82%
Europe	7	91%	71%	82%
India & APAC	7	88%	74%	78%

Does ‘satisfaction’ mean the same for Kiwis and Indians? Are the drivers of customer satisfaction the same for Americans and the French? How do people from different regions or cultures perceive good customer service? Questions like these were drivers for us to look at different from a regional perspective.

We couldn’t find a correlation between first response rate, one-touch resolution, and customer satisfaction. America and Europe have the same one-touch resolution rate but different customer satisfaction scores. Neither did their SLA scores match.

**Research** shows that regions with collectivist cultures such as Asia and America place higher importance on service than on product. These interactions also require the presence of a support person to be deemed as a positive customer experience. However, this isn’t the case with individualistic cultures such as the US or Europe where product or its attributes have higher significance in determining positive customer experience.

# Freshdesk Features and Its Impact

## Automations

A few years ago, admins relied on manual processes for recurring tasks such as assigning tickets, prioritizing them, or sending out surveys to customers. This had to do predominantly with cost, resource crunch, or lack of technical expertise.

Organizations have come a long way to exploring the benefits of automation and setting up robust processes in place that save time and money, improve efficiency, and increase customer satisfaction. Some of the important benefits that we have discovered when our customers use extensive automation include:

## Accelerated Resolution Rate by Minimum 3x

Industry	No. of tickets resolved with minimum or no automation	No. of tickets resolved with extensive automation	Increase in productivity (by x times)
Corporate Services	2	22	11
Banks	2	12	6
Food & Beverage	3	17	5.7
Computer Software	1	4	4
Hospitals & Healthcare	2	7	3.5
Leisure, Sports & Recreation	3	13	4.3
Computer Hardware	2	5	2.5
Retail	6	17	2.8

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**VOONIK.**

*“I have been able to automate the ticket allocation process with help of Freshdesk using rules based on some commonly raised queries such as refund, return, how to shop etc. This has helped us achieve improvement in first call resolution by 70%.”*

*—Jiaullah, QA Engineer at Voonik*

## Reduced Assign Time by Minimum 2x

Industry	No. of tickets resolved with minimum or no automation	No. of tickets resolved with extensive automation	Decrease in assign time (by x times)
Computer Hardware	26	3	8.7
Banks	16	2	8
Hospitals & Healthcare	34	7	4.9
Leisure, Sports & Recreation	24	9	2.7
Computer Software	19	9	2.1
Retail	13	7	1.9
Food & Beverage	20	12	1.7
Corporate Services	19	12	1.6

# Self Service

Organizations are increasingly moving towards self-service that includes support channels such as knowledge base, FAQs, online forums, and communities. This is evident from customers' shifting preference towards self-service tools. According to [Forrester](#), 72% of customers prefer using a self-service tool over assisted service. Some of the reasons we identified behind this shift include—

- Customers want to discover information themselves
- They want to avoid repeating the problem to multiple agents or on multiple support channels
- They want their questions promptly responded to
- Customers find that searching for answers themselves is quicker
- Self-service helps customers know the product they are using better
- It gives them control on how much they want to know about a product

This shift has worked in favor of organizations that have implemented self-service because it reduces resources and saves time for the support agents. And when optimized well and done right, it has a positive effect on customer satisfaction as well. When we looked at our own data of some of the industries that use self service extensively, we saw how self-service and customer satisfaction are closely tied.

We also noticed that customers who used self-service tools such as knowledge base, and forums were able to deflect tickets by up to 10% and reduce the ticket volume. This, in turn, has helped our customers meet their SLAs as well.

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Silverwiz

*“As a product manager, it’s great to have a single place like the Freshdesk forums where I can see what people actually want from our products and tell our users what’s in store for them.”*

*—Iliya Yordanov, Co-Founder at SilverWiz*

## Reduced Average Response Time by Minimum 4 Hrs

Industry	Zero use of self-service tools	Extensive use of self-service tools	Drop in hours
Computer Software	30	18	12 hrs
Corporate Services	25	19	6 hrs
Insurance	11	7	4 hrs
Retail	20	16	4 hrs

This trend has also been observed in the past with some of our customers —

- [Applian Technologies](#), a software company that develops and provides streaming media recording software uses Freshdesk for seamless support across its products. This customer observed an instant 15% reduction in support tickets by setting up the self-serve features.
- [NeCTAR](#) reported a reduction in tickets by 50-60% with the help of our Knowledge Base feature
- [hhp](#), the European leading supplier in developing, producing and selling medical massage technology products quotes canned response as one of its favorite features; the company also observed a 33% reduction in average response time with better ticket management.

## Increased SLA %

Industry	Zero use of self-service tools (%)	Extensive use of self-service tools (%)	Increase SLA (%)
Computer Software	67	83	16
Corporate Services	76	80	4
Insurance	85	89	4
Retail	83	84	1

“



**Lesley**  
UNIVERSITY

*“We were blown away when we saw Freshdesk. The combination of social, email, knowledge base, mobile, and gamification all together is what sealed the deal for us.”*

*—Charles Cooper, Director of Technology Support Services at Lesley University*

## Creating Successful Self Service

- **Understand your customers’ preferences** to create a self service portal that provides an enriching support experience for them. To begin with, identify content that is most searched for and build on from there.
- The self-service content you put out needs to address the questions that customers come searching for. **Make it easy for them to navigate through the content** using categories, tags, related keywords, etc.
- Customers flock to your support page through various platforms and devices. Ensure that you **optimize your self service for all devices**.
- The self-service database is a wealth of information. But not all information is relevant at all times because as your product/service evolves, customers’ questions change. **Keep your knowledge base up-to-date**.
- **Personalize the support experience** for your customers. Some of the actions you can take are using single sign-in options, populating data fields based on information used on related pages, or saving search history for easy reference.

## Omni-channel Support

Providing great customer service consistently is key to customer loyalty. If you fail to do that, there is a chance that context will be lost or it will become inconvenient for customers to reach out to you from wherever they are. Since expectations are constantly evolving and the role of tech in support is also increasing, customers’ preferred channel of support has also been changing.

Customers expect to have a seamless experience no matter the channel they choose to reach out to a company or organization. On the other hand, it enables support agents to have a single path to answer customer queries. Omni-channel support helps both the customer and the support teams to communicate with ease no matter the channel of communication. It ensures context and continuity of the conversation.

With this kind of support, all the queries from different channels are converted to tickets within a helpdesk software. The support agents can then pick them up and respond to them without context being lost.

We noticed that not all industries have fully optimized their support for omni-channel. However, the ones that have adapted to this trend have seen significant improvement in their customer satisfaction score. Pharma and biotech open the list with 176% increase in customer satisfaction.

## Increased CSAT by Minimum 35%

Industry	With multi-channel support	Without multi-channel support	Increase by
Pharma and Biotech	58%	21%	176%
Consumer Products	46%	21%	119%
Insurance	61%	31%	97%
Electronics	53%	28%	89%
Computer Hardware	74%	42%	76%
Leisure, Sports and Recreation	44%	25%	76%
Construction & Building Mat.	64%	39%	64%
Telecommunications	51%	33%	55%
Financial Services	42%	31%	35%
Retail	42%	31%	35%

# Implementing a Great Omni-channel Customer Experience

To have a highly efficient omni-channel support system in place, you need to follow four simple steps. To start with, you need a framework within which you can work out a strategy to set you the omni-channel support for your organization. This framework will also help you align your support goals in line with your customers' expectations.

**Chart out your customer journey** to understand the different points at which customers interact with your product or website. These touchpoints in the customer's purchase cycle will tell you what kind of support you need to offer your customers at each of those points. It also gives you an idea of what support channel is best suited for each of those touchpoints.

You need to keep in mind that no matter which channel you use at what points, your customers experience a single journey — that they are not in too many places to purchase a single product from you.

**Make it future proof** by looking at the bigger picture. You need to ask questions that ensure that this set is scalable. For instance, three years from now, what would your support goals look like? Or what would your customer's purchase journey look like? Would it make sense to automate repetitive tasks? Are there enough resources or processes in place to handle surprises like a sudden spike in ticket volume?

The most important value that you, as an organization, can derive from an omni-channel support is flexibility. You can integrate multiple support channels under one roof and also be able to turn on and off a few of those channels depending on your need.

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*“The ‘Freshdesk’ platform has resulted in elimination of multiple communication points with the customer & has also provided us with an option to aggregate leads. It offers great features and a fantastic user experience in a very affordable package.”*

*—Ramakrishna NK, CEO at Rang De*

**Choose the right customer support software** because your channel strategy is dynamic and can be bent to match your customers' requirements and preferences. It allows your customer to reach you through any support channel be it email, chat, or social. It gives you context so that you know exactly what the customer's query is.

When choosing an omni-channel support software, you need to check if it supports all possible support channels and whether it allows for integrations with other tools. **Optimize it for mobile** because the world is going mobile and so should your support strategy.

**Revisit and refine your omni-channel strategy** if you are serious about keeping up with your customers' expectations. Analyze data on how your support channels are doing. Constantly monitor them so that you know what's working and what's not for each interconnected support channel. Also look at how your customers are rating their experience at each touch point in their purchase journey. Using this information to refine your support strategy.

# Trends to Look out for in 2018

The way customer satisfaction index is measured has evolved over the years. We looked at the global customer satisfaction index and how it is measured, and observed two key points.

## Proactive Support Will Take the Lead

As mentioned earlier, customer support will be the key differentiator for companies against their competition. To improve customer happiness, companies will move from reactive support to proactive support. They will aim to identify and address customer issues before they become problems.

Proactive support offers plenty of opportunities for companies to turn customers into brand advocates. Another important advantage of proactive support is that it reduces escalations and improves the customer happiness quotient.

## Brands Will Explore Newer Avenue to Impress Customers

Brands will begin to expand their ecosystems to areas slightly outside their scope of business. For example, Uber began as a cab service. However, it has now expanded into food delivery service with UberEats. Banks, for instance, used to process house loans for customers.

But today, they have begun to identify and recommend reputable real estate agents so that the customers' overall home-purchase journey turns out to be a positive experience. This will ensure that they deliver maximum value to their customers resulting in customer happiness.

## Messenger Bots and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Technological advancements will make virtual assistance available for everyone. Though the idea of messenger bots and AI have been around for some time, it will now be easier to deploy and use them. This will help customer support teams by taking care of mundane tasks leaving the support agents with plenty of time to handle bigger and more critical issues. It will also ensure that no communication touch points are left unaddressed. This will improve not just customer satisfaction but also team productivity to a great extent.

Teams across different functions including sales and marketing which are closely tied to customer support will begin to use virtual assistants as well. It will also open up a lot of opportunities for companies to deliver a more targeted and personalized experience to customers resulting in support experiences that are more relevant to customers.

## GDPR Will Raise the Stakes Against Customer Support

EU's new [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) will give European citizens the right to have their personal information deleted by companies. This regulation has been rolled out on May 25, 2018. Without customer information, the chances of delivering a personalized customer experience or have context when responding to customer issues will be reduced.

Companies need to ensure that customer touch points that are not relevant and timely should be tackled quickly. When customers are unhappy with the service, they turn away from the organization leading to customers asking for their data to be deleted. Considering customers and businesses are spread across the globe the chances of such requests will drastically increase. Hence, [businesses need to take great care](#) to ensure that customers are happy.

## Contributors



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