



2021 Customer Expectations Report

What Customers Expect From a Modern Online Shopping Experience



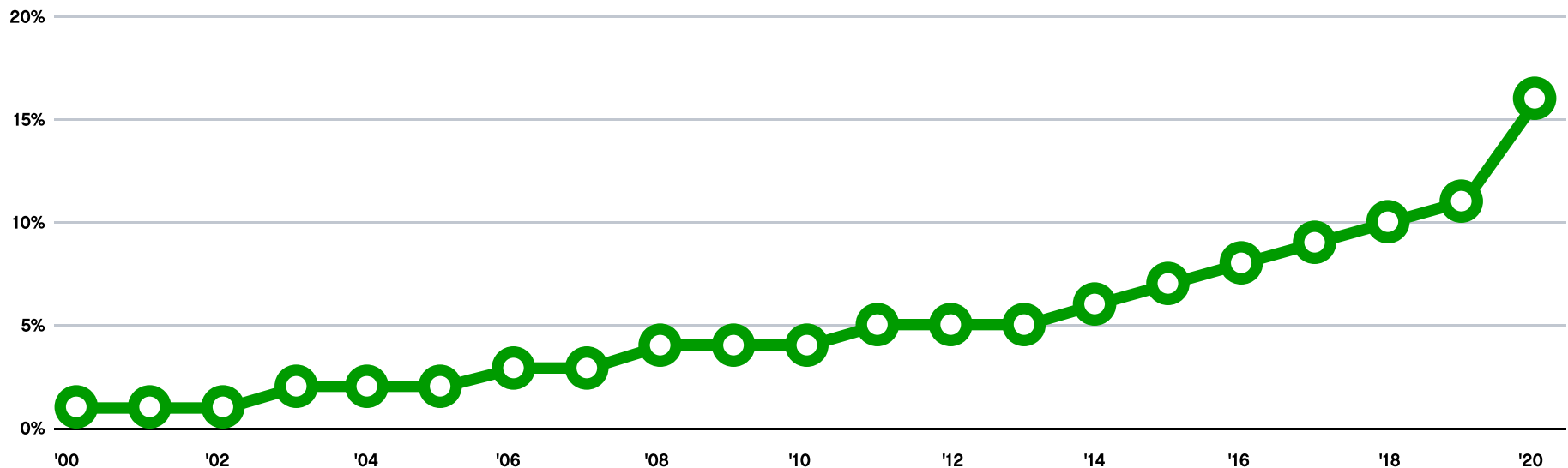
Digital is now the new flagship store

2020 was without a doubt a year of unprecedented change. Between nationwide store closures and mandatory stay-at-home orders, this year saw ecommerce pushed into hyperdrive, achieving 10 years of growth in the span of less than year. Yet despite that marked shift from real-world to online, what we found was that customers nevertheless brought the same expectations of the high-touch, personalized experience they were used to receiving in-store to the digital store as well.

This year's Customer Expectations Report is all about what customers expect from their favorite brands when it comes to the online shopping experience. Gone are the days of support teams being reactionary problem solvers. In a digital world, customer service heroes are the face of the brand, and the level of service your customers expect from them has risen accordingly.

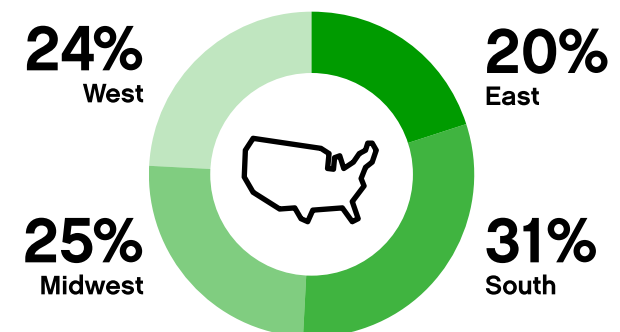
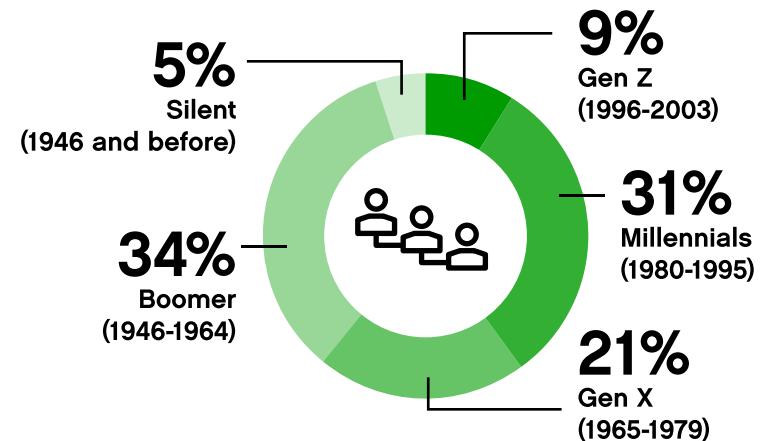
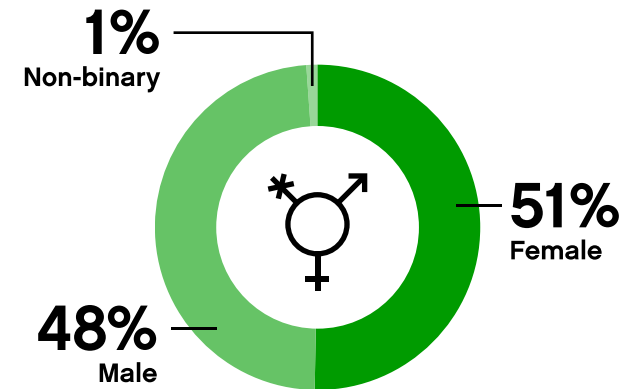
As you consider how to keep pace with your customers—both longtime and newly won in this era of the 'new normal'—we hope this information helps you keep pace with today's ever-increasing customer expectations.

ECOMMERCE SALES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RETAIL SALES



Customer survey methodology and demographics

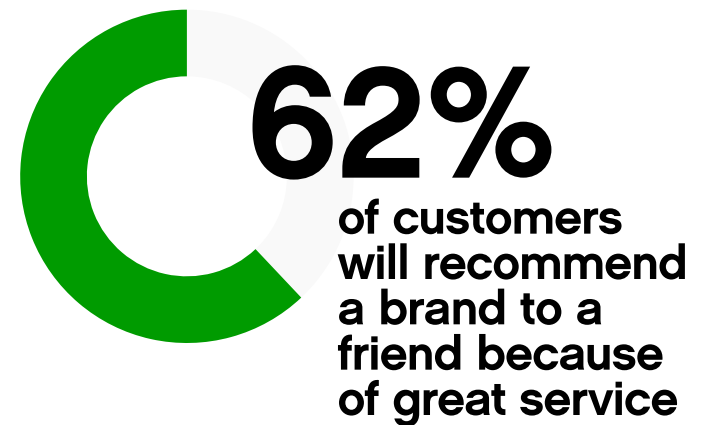
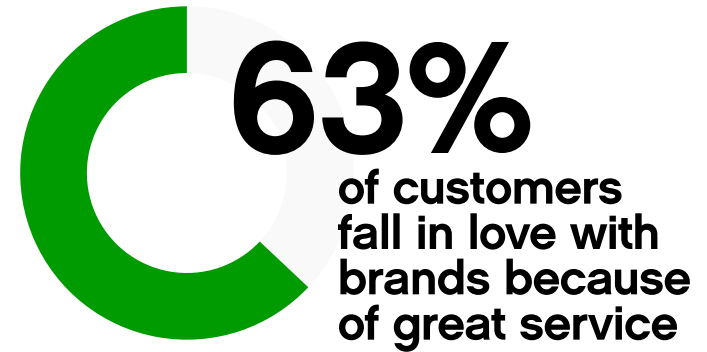
Gladly commissioned Zogby Analytics, a nationally and internationally respected research firm, founded in 1984, to conduct an online survey of 1,500 adults in the U.S. Using internal and trusted interactive partner resources, thousands of adults were randomly invited to participate in this interactive survey. Each invitation was password coded and secure so that one respondent could only access the survey one time. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 1,509 is +/- 2.5 percentage points. This means that all other things being equal, if the identical survey were repeated, its confidence intervals would contain the true value of parameters 95 times out of 100.



Customer Highlights

Customer service continues to be a competitive advantage for brands

In a year where consumers have had to significantly change the way they shop across the board, customer service nevertheless remains the number one factor in deciding a customer's long term relationship with a brand. Outside of delivering a great product, customers fall in love with brands because of the service they deliver, not because of clever marketing campaigns.



Exceptional service still the outlier vs. the norm

The bar continues to rise on what constitutes exceptional service. Customers now expect their favorite brands to go above and beyond to earn their loyalty and business. Gone are the days where simply replying quickly to customers has the highest impact on CSAT. Today's customers expect to be known by the brands they shop with, and expect to be able to change channels without having to start their conversation over again.



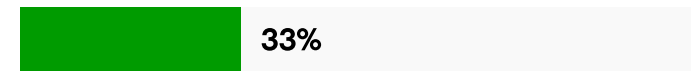
Only **19%** of consumers believe customer service today is exceeding their expectations

AND THIS IS WHAT MAKES IT EXCEPTIONAL

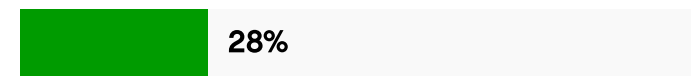
Having one seamless conversation across all channels



Following up on issues to ensure satisfaction



Recommending products proactively



0% 50% 100%

Customers just want to feel known

When it comes to what makes a poor customer service experience, the top issues all came down to a lack of personalization; namely that brands were asking their customers questions they should already know the answer to. Knowing a customers name, their order number, and their purchase history before the conversation begins are now tablestakes when it comes to delivering great service.



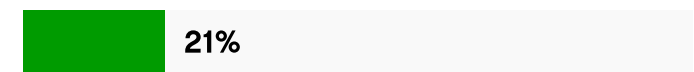
81% of consumers believe customer service falls below their expectations

TOP 3 FRUSTRATIONS ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE

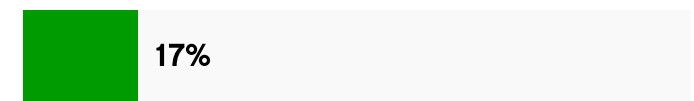
I have to explain my issue over and over again



I have to know my ticket or order number



The brand doesn't know my order history or status



0%

50%

100%

Top Trends

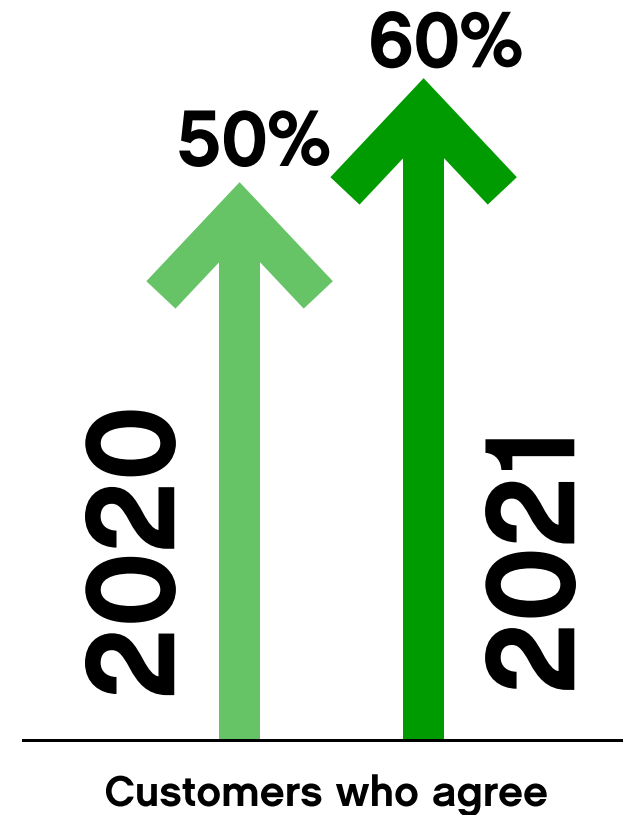
Trend 01.

**Customers Want
to Help Themselves
When Online**

Self-service trending up

When it comes to shopping online, we saw a marked increase in the number of customers who prefer to solve issues themselves without having to talk to a service representative. With most inquiries relating to shipping updates and questions on returns, brands that can deliver this information automatically will not only make for more satisfied customers, but benefit from a more efficient use of their agents' time.

"I PREFER TO RESOLVE ISSUES ON MY OWN WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE"



The verdict is still out on chatbots

Customer attitudes towards chatbots diverge depending on the problem they are trying to solve. While helpful in resolving simple questions, they still cause a lot of friction for customers just looking to talk with a real human. The lesson for brands? Think about how to balance the efficiency of chatbots with the desire for human help, and always provide an easy route to human support.

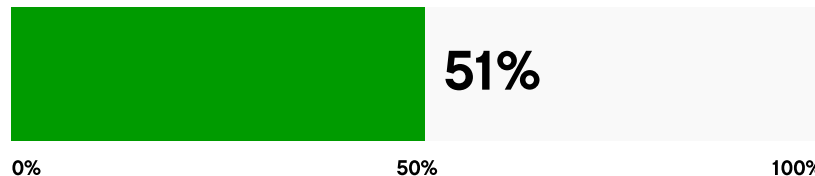
Chatbots are **most** helpful when...

(TOP TWO ANSWERS WE RECEIVED)

I don't want to talk (and wait) for a real person



Answering simple questions as quickly as possible



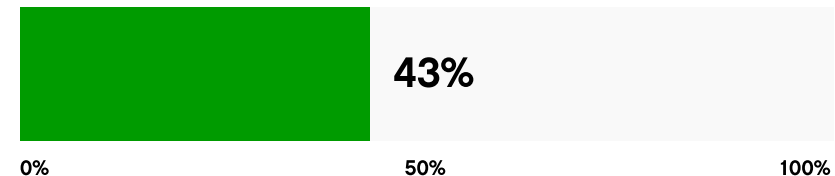
Chatbots are **least** helpful when...

(TOP TWO ANSWERS WE RECEIVED)

I feel like a non-valued customer and just a number



I have to jump through hoops just to talk to someone



Trend 02.

**Customers Still
Value Human Help**

Who (and what) they are shopping for matters

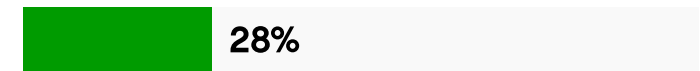
Factors like the type of product being shopped for, who the customer is shopping for, and how often they've interacted with the brand affect whether a customer will reach out via chat. Coming as no surprise, when the price of a product increases so does the desire to chat with a brand before making an online purchase.

TOP 4 OCCASIONS CUSTOMERS CHAT WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE AGENTS

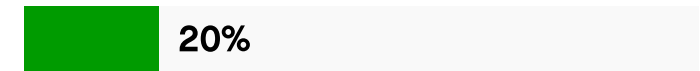


WHAT ISSUES DO CUSTOMERS CHAT ABOUT THE MOST?

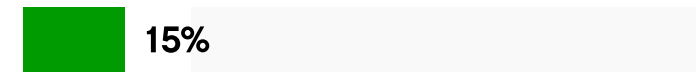
Questions about a product



Shipping status or return issues



Changing a reservation or appointment



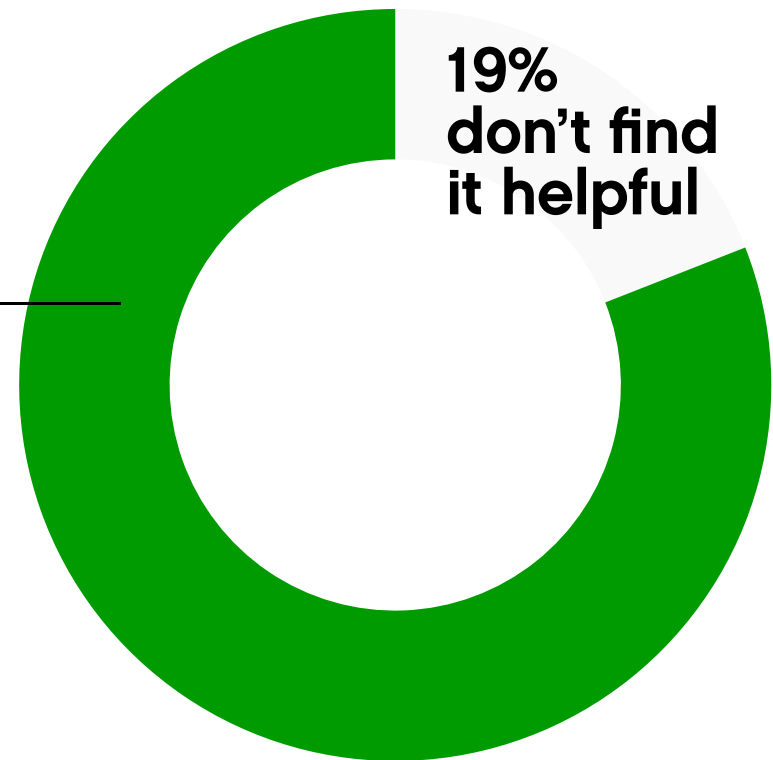
0% 50% 100%

Consumers want brands to be proactive

Proactively chatting with customers on your website is not only expected, but also appreciated by customers. This can be anything from a friendly, generic pop-up asking “how can I help you?” to more sophisticated chat windows that appear when a customer appears to be struggling during checkout. However, the offer to help needs to feel natural and appear at the right time of the customer’s shopping journey so it feels authentic instead of forced.

81%

find it helpful when a chat window appears proactively while they’re shopping to ask if they have a question



Trend 03.

**Customers Will
Reward Brands Who
Make the Shopping
Experience Effortless**

Consultative service is expected

Since self-service options can now answer the more simple asks, customers find the most value in talking to agents who can tackle the harder questions and guide them to the best products and options for their specific needs. Knowing that customers want a brand's recommendations, now is the time to invest in product training to ensure that support teams are in a position to be the experts on the products they sell.



82% will spend more money on brands that deliver great service online

TOP 3 THINGS CUSTOMERS EXPECT WHEN CHATTING WITH A CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE ONLINE ABOUT A PRODUCT

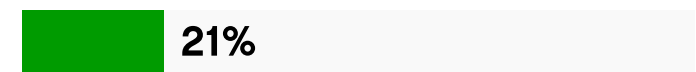
That they are a knowledgeable expert on the product I have a question on



That they recommend other things they know I will like



That they spend extra time consulting on other options

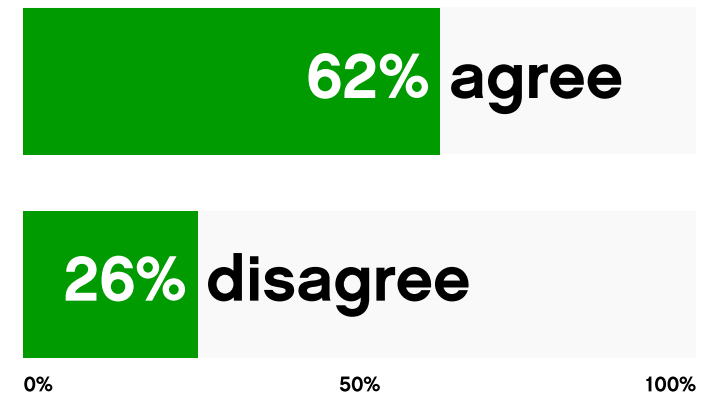


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Don't miss opportunities to close the sale

Customers don't want to leave the conversation to check out, especially when they're already chatting with an agent online. Empowering agents to accept payments during a conversation not only lessens your customers' effort, but also ensures you close the sale. If you aren't already taking payment via chat, you're missing out!

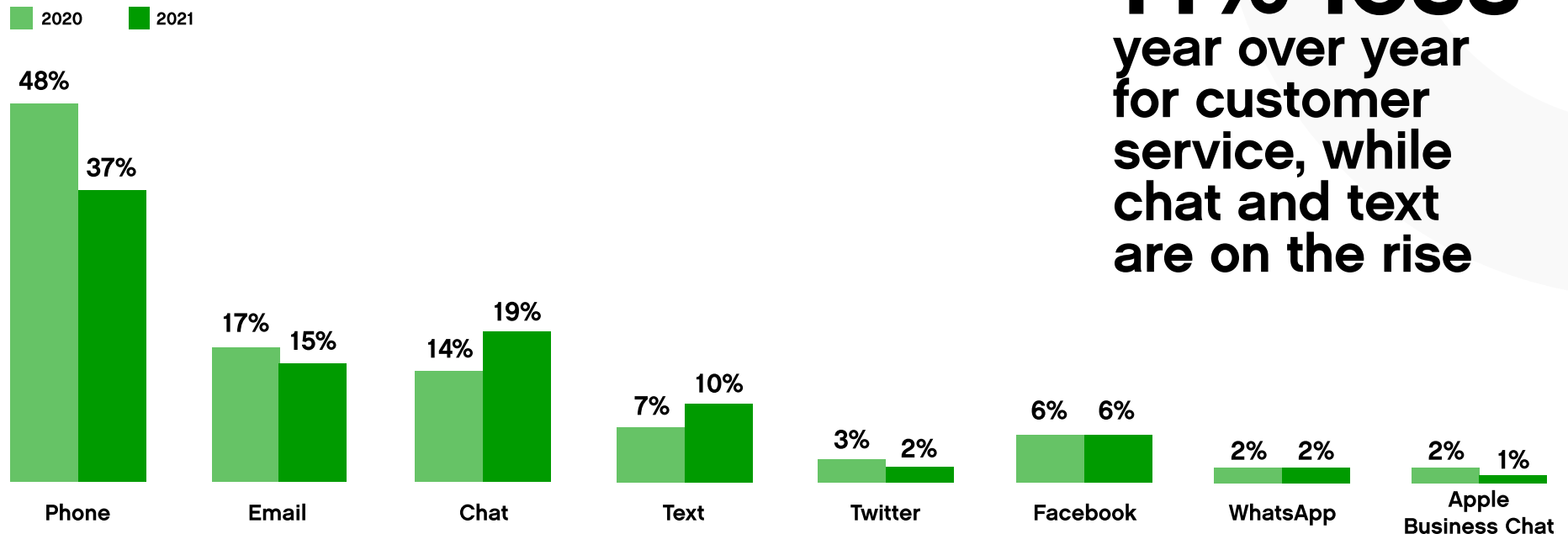
“WHEN CHATTING WITH A REPRESENTATIVE ONLINE, I PREFER TO COMPLETE MY PURCHASE DURING THE CONVERSATION ITSELF VS HAVING TO NAVIGATE THROUGH THE SHOPPING CART”



Chat finally surpasses email

While phone continues to be the most widely used channel, email has finally lost its grasp on second place. With more and more brands turning to chat on their website vs contact forms, customers have started to gravitate to chat in waves. According to our data (and rather unsurprisingly) millennials are using Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp more than any other age group, and their preference for these newer digital channels continues to increase steadily year over year.

TOP CHANNEL PREFERENCES



Customers used their phone **11% less** year over year for customer service, while chat and text are on the rise

The Gladly Difference

Radically Personal service is all about delivering an experience that feels personalized and effortless, without compromising on speed.

Gladly is built for modern customer service teams and is helping the world's top brands make the seamless shift to personalized customer service across ecommerce and digital channels.

AFTER SWITCHING TO GLADLY, COMPANIES SEE UP TO

