

Get Smarter with Your Service, and Differentiate Yourself from the Competition

Build competitive advantage with a
powerful, complete service approach



The experience your customers demand today is radically different from what was expected just a few years ago.

With the rise of always-on mobile services, connected social platforms, and multichannel experiences, today's consumers expect to engage with brands how, when, where, and how often they like.

With this level of choice, consumers now take a range of different—often unique—journeys as they engage with your brand and products. Whatever journeys your customers take to reach you, it's up to your business to deliver a personalized, seamless experience across all channels a customer may choose to engage you through.

This guide explores how you can deliver the innovative service experiences your customers crave, and provide service that drives real business benefits.



The need for simplicity

Today's customers are tech-savvy, knowledgeable, and informed across a range of topics. They can also be impatient when they can't get the level of service they demand. That's why **73 percent say that valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide them with good online customer service.**¹

To deliver great service on time, every time, you need to offer a simple service portal that makes it quick and easy for service agents and customers to get the information they need.

Make it easy

A simpler approach can make it easier for customers to find the information they need, or to resolve their own issues, which improves the service experience and frees up your agents to focus on more complex inquiries.

Whether it's through self-service portals, virtual assistants, or adaptive mobile displays, customers will have a more satisfying service experience if they can quickly and easily solve any issues they may have—on their preferred channel.

More importantly, customers often expect to have this kind of self-service available to them and are likely to be disappointed if you

won't provide it. Service leaders are deploying new technologies to keep their self-service capabilities one step ahead to match those evolving customer expectations. In fact, **by 2021, businesses that redesigned their websites to support visual and voice search will increase digital commerce revenue by 30 percent.**²

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), can help drive self-service. So it's no surprise **63 percent of technical decision makers are implementing, have implemented, or are expanding their use of AI.**³

Beyond self-service, a simpler approach to your service portals can make it easier for customers to access service agents. Considering **53 percent of customers get irritated if they can't speak to a real person immediately,**⁴ it's becoming increasingly important to develop a range of ways customers can connect with service agents.

By offering a range of channels, including live chat, social messaging, and community knowledge centers, you can put customers in touch with real people faster, and better meet their expectations.

¹ Forrester, "73% say that valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide them with good online customer service." [forrester.com/report/Trends+2016+The+Future+Of+Customer+Service/-/E-RES61372](https://www.forrester.com/report/Trends+2016+The+Future+Of+Customer+Service/-/E-RES61372).

² Gartner, "Gartner Top Strategic Predictions for 2018 and Beyond," [gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/gartner-top-strategic-predictions-for-2018-and-beyond/](https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/gartner-top-strategic-predictions-for-2018-and-beyond/).

³ Forrester, "Forrester Data Infographic: Who's Driving AI Adoption In The Enterprise?," go.forrester.com/blogs/forrester-data-infographic-whos-driving-ai-adoption-in-the-enterprise/.

⁴ "The Multibillion Cost of Poor Customer Service," Infographic, [nvm-eu-west-1-www.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-uploads/2014/01/NVM-Infographic-US-3.jpg](https://www.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-uploads/2014/01/NVM-Infographic-US-3.jpg)



89 percent of customers remain loyal to brands that offer great customer service.⁶

Bring in context to create organic channels

To solve more complex issues, customers may have to engage service agents multiple times, across several different channels, sometimes simultaneously. If customers have to repeat their issue to every single new agent, they will quickly become frustrated.

Companies that provide a consistent service quality across multiple channels retain 89 percent of their customers, whereas companies that do not provide a consistent quality are only able to retain 33 percent.⁵

To provide the best service experience, you need to ensure all of your agents can see all of a customer's data—and their entire service journey—in real-time, no matter what channel the customer uses. Whether your service agents are in a call center or out in the field, if they have a unified, contextual view of the customer, they can provide a far better level of service.

By bringing in context, empowering service agents, and making it easy for customers to engage your brand across multiple channels simultaneously, you can start offering organic service channels.

In the past, service channels such as calling a service center or meeting an agent in store required a customer's complete attention. Today, with self-service channels and online chat, customers can engage your brand at multiple points at the same time.

When customers can easily jump between multiple channels simultaneously, we call them *organic channels*. By delivering organic channels, you can offer experiences that better match each customer's preferences, differentiate your service offerings, and take customer satisfaction to the next level.

⁵ Upwork, "Omni-Channel Customer Service Best Practices," [upwork.com/hiring/for-clients/omni-channel-customer-service-best-practices](https://www.upwork.com/hiring/for-clients/omni-channel-customer-service-best-practices)

⁶ Deloitte, "Customer loyalty: A relationship, not just a scheme", <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/consumer-business/deloitte-uk-consumer-review-customer-loyalty.pdf>.

Improve agility

The state of service changes fast, with new channels and approaches being adopted at different rates at different times. For instance, between 2013 and 2014, **customer service interactions increased 250 percent.**⁷

Whatever service tools and processes you use, make sure you can quickly reconfigure them to match changing service conditions and customer expectations. Build a service solution that has the agility to add new service channels and support sites as necessary—and ensure they'll match with existing brand material when they go live.

Service that stands out

While it's important to deliver a high level of service, you also need to offer new and innovative kinds of service experiences if you want your brand to stand out from the crowd. In fact, **89 percent of organizations consider service to be their primary competitive differentiator.**⁸ Far from just setting you apart from the competition, innovative service can make it easier to build brand loyalty and reputation—and retain customers over the long term.

⁷ Maher Masri et al. "Your Company Should Be Helping Customers on Social," blog.twitter.com/marketing/en_us/a/2015/research-four-ways-brands-can-build-customer-service-relationships-on-twitter.html

⁸ Jake Sorofman, "Gartner Surveys Confirm Customer Experience is the New Battlefield," Blog, 23 October 2014, blogs.gartner.com/jake-sorofman/gartner-surveys-confirm-customer-experience-new-battlefield/

⁹ Ibid.



89 percent of businesses compete primarily through their service offerings.⁹

Use your knowledge

When customers engage with a service channel, it's normally because they're looking for an answer to a question or help with a specific problem. If your agents can't answer their question or solve the issue correctly and quickly, they risk turning that customer away from your brand. This can be a fast track to losing the customer completely. If the customer shares their poor experience on social media, it could even damage your brand reputation.

To avoid this risk, you need to ensure your organization is knowledge-driven and places accurate, up-to-date information in the hands of contact center agents, field service agents, and consumers alike.

You can even go one step further and connect different knowledge sources. By bringing structured knowledge sources together with community FAQs and central knowledgebases, you can confidently answer all customer questions and deliver superior service faster than ever before.

Embrace service automation

While keeping up with innovations, providing personalized experiences, and incorporating organic channels is great for customers, these activities can put a strain on your service people and processes.

Automation can help minimize this strain by removing much of the administrative burden your agents have to deal with and helping them deliver more streamlined, satisfying service. More importantly, automation creates a better working environment for agents, with **40 percent of contact centers reporting increased agent satisfaction after deploying Internet of Things (IoT) or connected technologies that support service automation.**¹⁰

Implemented properly, automation can also improve the capabilities of self-service portals, allowing contact-center agents to provide better resolutions for customers.

This helps field service teams start working on the job before they are even onsite.

New technologies such as augmented reality (AR) can take things even further, allowing customers to solve their own issues through a guided AR experience. Likewise, virtual assistants can help streamline self-service portals, and accelerate back-office tasks such as locating parts or technical information. Hardware innovations like connected IoT devices can also send alerts about broken parts or incorrectly configured equipment automatically, without requiring any customer or agent intervention.

40 percent of contact centers reported increased agent satisfaction after deploying IoT/connected technologies that support service automation.¹¹

¹⁰ ICMI, "Next-Generation Service: The Role of AI, IoT, and Automation in Contact Center Transformation," Executive Brief, oracle.com/webfolder/s/delivery_production/docs/FY16h1/doc38/ICMI17-Oracle-ResearchAIExecSummary.pdf

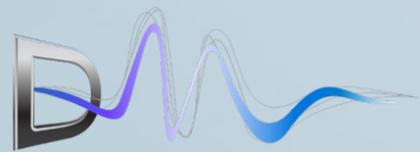
¹¹ Ibid.

Deliver business results with consistently great service

Simplifying and innovating your customer experience is essential—but it isn't enough on its own. You also need to ensure your efforts deliver a tangible business impact.

With the right solutions and processes in place, you can deliver a level of service that improves customer retention and brand reputation—and delivers real results for the business.

With 89 percent of businesses competing primarily through their service offerings,¹² improving your brand's reputation through service can translate directly to higher revenue.



One example of this is D+M Group. By using Oracle Service Cloud and offering online self-service, the audio and video equipment brand was able to increase agent effectiveness by 10 percent, reduce the volume of long service calls, and save \$90K to \$180K a month.

¹² Jake Sorofman, "Gartner Surveys Confirm Customer Experience is the New Battlefield," Blog, 23 October 2014, blogs.gartner.com/jake-sorofman/gartner-surveys-confirm-customer-experience-new-battlefield/





Become a market disruptor

Beyond delivering high-quality service, you can also aim to build entirely new service offerings that set you apart and disrupt your competitors.

Some organizations have used new service platforms to drive organic channels, while others have created part-time freelance service communities made up of existing customers in order to build competitive advantage through service.

FreedomPop

Cellphone provider FreedomPop was able to make a name for itself in a competitive market by employing a community of super-users to deliver premium customer service to peers. By working with Oracle, FreedomPop created a unified knowledge bank and ticketing system that empowered both community volunteers and traditional service agents alike—all while reducing costs and resolution times across the board.

How can Oracle help?

Oracle Service Cloud offers a range of solutions that can help you simplify IT, innovate with your service offerings, and deliver compelling business outcomes. With support for web chat, cobrowsing, policy automation, and other adaptive intelligent solutions, Oracle Service Cloud can help you offer a compelling, unique service experience that improves customer satisfaction and retention.

All solutions are connected at the application and data level, so you can make the most of important customer context and empower your field and service agents. Oracle Service Cloud is also easy to configure and integrate, helping you connect it to existing systems, third-party applications, and other sources of customer behavior and purchase data.

How are you currently performing in CX? [Chat live with an expert now.](#)

Learn how Oracle can help you simplify, innovate, and deliver smarter service. [Take a tour of Oracle Service Cloud.](#)