Better customer experiences with omnichannel engagement

More conversation leads to better relationships. This is true in life and in customer service.

With friends, it doesn't seem so hard to begin a conversation on Facebook and to pick it up in person, but in customer service it can be a lot more challenging. Multiply the number of customers with the number of available communication channels, and the ease with which customers can communicate on their mobile devices, and suddenly there's a lot to track.

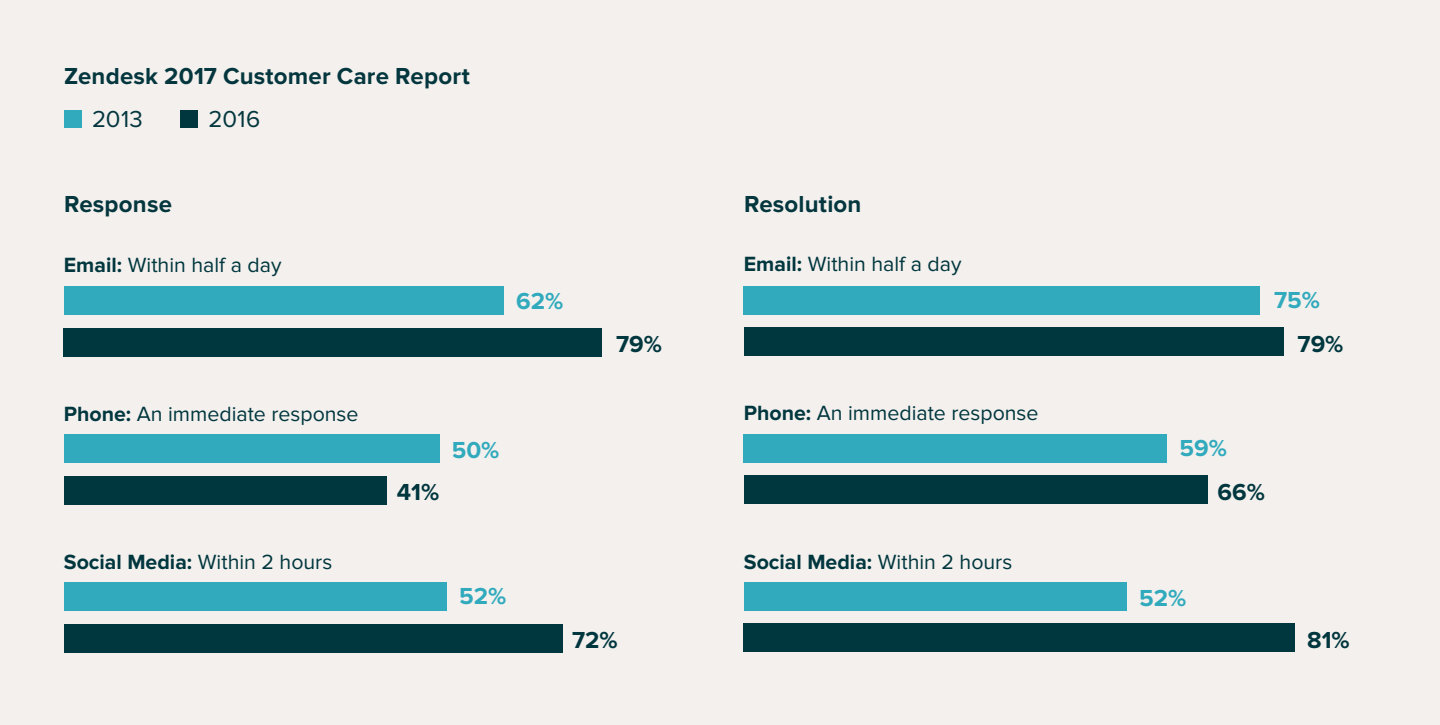
Without an omnichannel strategy and solution, customer conversations become siloed in different tools or systems, creating a disjoined customer experience. These days, it is as important to answer customers as it is to track when and where they contact you, and to pick up each conversation right where the last one left off.

The changing definition of good service

The digital economy and the rapid adoption of technology have changed everything about the customer experience. Consumers rely on word-of-mouth as much as ever, but often from review sites, from people they don't know. They're also interacting with companies before and after the point of sale to ask questions before committing.

There's more information at hand, leading to more informed decision-making, which is great—except that the multitude of consumer questions places a higher demand for resources on a business. The more a business meets consumer expectations, the higher those expectations climb. It may sound daunting, but consumers are raising the bar and helping all of us to provide better customer service.

Research by Loudhouse, published in The Multichannel Customer Care Report 2017, revealed the degree to which consumers' expectations have changed over the past three years. Consumers expect more from customer service interactions than ever before and demand better resolution times across every channel of engagement.



Of those surveyed, 61 percent were less patient with customer service than they were five years ago—a trend that can lead to lower satisfaction scores and erode customer loyalty. Today's conscious consumer expects help to be quick, easy, and personalized.

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Help your team meet customer expectations

It's possible to give customers what they want, but you'll need an engagement model that allows you to move with the customer, and to shift in time with the customer's needs, preferences, and changing expectations. You'll also need a solution that does more for you. Solving a ticket is good, but uncovering the root problem is better. Excellent service isn't just about resolving a ticket; it's getting to know your customer.

A good way to get to know your customers better is to give them choices for how and when to interact with your business. It's not just that some customers prefer the phone while others gravitate towards self-service—it's more that customers prefer having options. Loudhouse found that over a six month period, 62 percent of customers used multiple channels when making a purchase.

The ability offer seamless service through all channels, or to strategically turn channels on or off as you grow, allows businesses of all size to meet consumer expectations. An omnichannel solution connects all channels so that agents can have continuous conversations, with access to history and context that leads to better support both in the moment, and in the future.

Let customers say it once and be done

A hallmark of excellent service is to make it easy for a customer to reach a business and get help. However, this is a sticking point for many businesses offering multichannel support. When channels are served by different agents using different systems, customers have to explain their issue—and every step they've already taken to resolve their issue—to everyone they reach.

This has been the way of things for a long time, but it's no longer the status quo. Research by Forrester, published in the Consumer Technographics North American Retail And Travel Customer Life Cycle Survey, Q1 2016 (US), found that 63 percent of respondents would like to move between customer service channels and not have to repeat their situation every time.

That makes sense, and a solution that allows for simultaneous conversations across channels, accessed through a single location, gives your agents all the context they need to serve the customer and resolve an issue without asking customers to repeat themselves. It also aids the agent and the business by eliminating the time spent asking the same questions over and over.

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Connected channels leads to more insight

The gains in productivity go far beyond removing repetition. An omnichannel strategy and solution allow businesses to meet customers where they are and to glean intelligence from each interaction.

Customers may begin an interaction on the channel that's most convenient to them. Perhaps they start with self-service, by searching for an answer on your help center. From there, they may initiate a chat. Fortunately, the agent handling the chat knows which articles the customer has already viewed and doesn't offer the same article in response. When agents are guided by a central source of customer intelligence, they're empowered to make decisions based on data instead of intuition.

Similarly, when support is embedded into your app, there's no need to ask a customer to tell you which version, and which device, they're using. Agents can get to the bottom of the issue sooner and may also be able to see how likely that customer is to be satisfied with the interaction and can take steps to ensure a positive experience.

The Zendesk omnichannel solution

Different customers have different needs and preferences. Sometimes they're loyal to a channel. Sometimes it depends on the kind of day they're having. Zendesk's omnichannel solution delivers the flexibility to cater to every customer and to set up omnichannel support right from the start, so that there's no need to re-engineer your engagement model later, as you grow.

Customer	What the customer wants	How Zendesk can help
"I need help, but it's not urgent."	A reply back in a reasonable amount of time—either the customer's issue isn't urgent or the customer doesn't want, or isn't able, to have a conversation in the moment.	**support** **Zendesk Support** is the central hub into which all other products are integrated. Support allows you to easily respond to emails or tickets created from web forms, and to track, prioritize, and solve tickets.
"I'll find it myself. I'm sure the answer is out there."	Quick, easy engagement—this customer expects your site to offer FAQs and to anticipate their questions.	**guide** **Zendesk Guide** takes the average knowledge base one step further by allowing you to build a powerful, customizable help center, and to empower agents to turn ticket content into articles, or to add articles to tickets. And with Answer Bot, you can even suggest relevant articles without the help of an actual agent.
"I just have a quick question." **Or:** **"I don't have a ton of time, but I need help now."**	Fast, almost immediate help—this customer knows you're there, waiting on the other side. What they don't know is that the agent has insight into how long they've lingered on your website, or which pages or help articles they've already visited.	**chat** **Zendesk Chat** connects customers to an agent ready to answer their questions, and can also provide insight into the customer journey up until that chat begins. To deflect chats, the Zendesk Web Widget can first suggest help articles based on search criteria, and then offer the option to chat. Chances are, the customer who skipped taking the time to search the help center can easily find what they need through the chat widget.
"I just need to talk to someone."	Connection with another human—either the customer's issue is urgent or complex, or they just want to be sure to make a human connection.	**talk** **Zendesk Talk** allows you to easily deliver that personal support with just a pair of headphones and the Internet. There's all the bells and whistles of a contact center, without all the fuss.

What you can do with Zendesk

Taken together, the products that make up Zendesk's omnichannel solutions can help you achieve your business goals in a variety of ways. Zendesk products are easy to use out of the box and can be configured pretty much any way that you can imagine.

With a Zendesk omnichannel solution, you can set your support organization up to provide world-class service from the start.

- **Start a conversation that doesn't end:** Adopting a customer engagement model with integrated channels doesn't have to be complicated or costly. With products designed to work seamlessly together, your organization can immediately gain a better understanding of a customer's history and experience with your company. Not only do all cross-channel interactions feed into Zendesk, but you can integrate that seamless support experience into your website and mobile app so that customers never have to travel far to find help.

- **Operationalize any—and every—channel:** Consider the Zendesk Developer platform your ticket to anywhere you want to go. Use the open APIs, App Framework or Channel Framework to build powerful integrations and easily bring in customer communications from internal, proprietary, and outside tools, or from ratings and review sites like Yelp, Reddit, or other popular social media sites. You can also extend Zendesk with one of the hundreds of third-party tools available in the Zendesk Apps Marketplace. It is a thriving ecosystem, and yours to explore.

- **Turn data into actionable insights:** Continuous cross-channel conversations make it easier to see the big picture, as well as the details of a customer interaction. Zendesk captures intelligence from every interaction, whether it's where the customer was on your site before they asked for help, what search terms they used in your help center, or what device they submitted a request from. Zendesk also allows you to track both customer satisfaction (CSAT) after every interaction, and brand loyalty over time with Net Promoter Surveys (NPS). A wealth of contextual information will leave you feeling confident about making real-time, data-driven business decisions—and since each customer interaction builds upon the last, it becomes easier to gauge expectations and even predict future preferences or satisfaction.

- **Serve up smart, fast answers with AI:** The way forward is AI, and with Zendesk, you can get your customers the answers they need at speeds that are faster than humanly possible. A feature of Zendesk Guide, Answer Bot uses a deep learning model that only improves over time. Answer Bot serves up answers automatically and can easily handle all the simple, repetitive questions so your team can focus on questions or tasks that require more time, troubleshooting, or a personal touch.

Envision your team as a profit center

Benefits are great, but results are far better. By investing in a Zendesk omnichannel solution, you can see immediate gains while also setting up your company or team for long-tail, ongoing growth. Forrester Consulting released the results of a study commissioned by Zendesk that examined the potential return on investment of adopting Zendesk's family of products. The resulting report, The Total Economic Impact of Zendesk, revealed that Zendesk solution adoption totaled more than **$3.8 million** across the seven organizations interviewed by Forrester. Benefits outweighed costs in several areas, including productivity, deflection through self-service, agent satisfaction and retention, and maintenance and admin cost savings.

Investing in better relationships is a proven growth driver. When businesses can make themselves available to customers on every channel and gain insight from each customer interaction, support organizations develop a deep understanding of the customer, their issues, challenges, trends in consumption or product usage, and can reduce customer churn and encourage future sales.

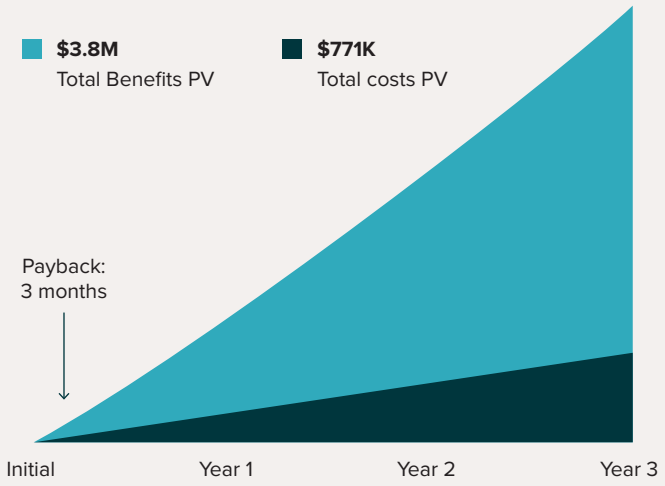
390%
ROI

$3.8 million
Benefits PV

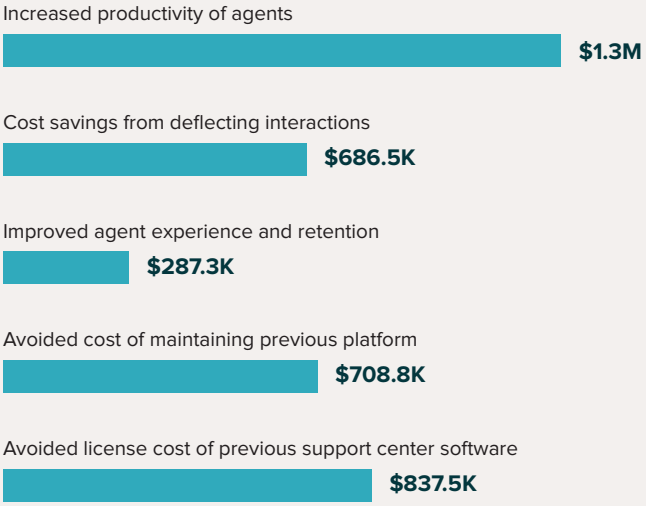
$3 million
NPV

2.8 months
Payback

Financial Summary



Benefits (Three-Year)



What our customers have done with Zendesk

Evernote uses Zendesk Support, Guide, and Chat to offer differentiated support to their freemium and business customers. They also use integrations from Zendesk's Apps Marketplace, including an integration with Salesforce. With self-service content offered in 30 languages, Evernote serves a global audience and has achieved a ticket deflection rate of 17 percent with Zendesk Guide.

Spartan Race uses Zendesk Support and Guide, and added proactive chat with Zendesk Chat for a 27 percent increase in sales. Spartan Race also integrated Support with social media and with Shopify to centralize service, social, and ecommerce customer data.

NatureBox offers omnichannel support through Zendesk's integrated solution. The company started small and scaled at its own pace, beginning with Support in 2013, rolling out Zendesk Guide and Zendesk Chat in 2015, and Zendesk Talk in 2017. Now, with all channels connected, NatureBox saw a 60 percent drop in call volume, an increase in CSAT, and saved 60 seconds in resolution time per ticket—across a monthly average of 19,000 tickets.

cleverbridge provides global support through Zendesk Support and Guide, and has extended Support with the Zendesk APIs. Zendesk's solution has enabled cleverbridge to scale, and the Answer Bot feature of Guide has helped the company achieve a 24 percent ticket deflection rate.

The future is here, and the time is now

No matter what your support organization's needs are, Zendesk's integrated omnichannel solutions allow teams to take the long view.

Beyond the queue, teams can focus on customer retention, cart abandonment, and overall customer satisfaction. For their part, customers can engage in their preferred engagement style and begin to build a lifelong relationship with your business.

The data shows that customers engage or re-engage with your business at multiples times and on multiple channels. They may even shift the way they engage with your company mid-interaction. With Zendesk's omnichannel solutions, your support team can also shift, without losing track of the conversation.

Whether you adopt the entire family of products or a subset of them, you'll have the flexibility to grow and expand alongside your customers, and will be better-equipped to meet current and forecasted demand. Even if you decide to start with a single channel, your vision can be larger, as Zendesk's solutions provide the necessary infrastructure to expand and refine your customer service as your business grows.

We've got a solution for you.
Visit zendesk.com to learn more.

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