

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

by Kate Leggett

January 27, 2017

Why Read This Report

In the age of the customer, your customers decide how customer-centric your company is. Customers expect easy, effective, deeply personal service, and this is shaping customer service technology priorities. This report summarizes the top 10 customer service trends for 2017 that application development and delivery (AD&D) pros supporting customer service operations must pay attention to in order to deliver customer service excellence.

Key Takeaways

Customer Service In 2017 Demands Customer Obsession

Customer service organizations must build on a foundation of operational efficiencies to deliver differentiated service experiences in line with customers' expectations. Only this level of customer obsession will result in higher levels of loyalty and company revenue.

Customer Service Organizations Are Becoming Smarter

Customers self-serve as a first point of contact with customer service organizations and escalate to agent-assisted channels when self-service fails. They expect easy, effective service interactions. As a result, customer service organizations field fewer calls as the volume of self-service and digital interactions increases. They also leverage process automation and analytics to become smarter.

Customer Service Organizations Become More Strategic

Companies must foster an emotional bond with the customer. This strengthens customer relationships in an increasingly digital and self-service world. Strong relationships help build loyalty, higher customer lifetime value, and advocacy — all positively affecting top-line revenue.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook



by [Kate Leggett](#)
with [Stephen Powers](#), [Ian Jacobs](#), Chad Rafferty, and Kara Hartig
January 27, 2017

Table Of Contents

2 Differentiated Service Delivers Potential For Top-Line Growth

The Ever-Changing Customer Service Technology Ecosystem Creates Value And Risk

3 Customer Service Operations Morph As Customers Self-Serve

5 Customer Service Operations Become Smarter

7 Customer Service Operations Become More Strategic

Recommendations

9 Pragmatic Execution Is The Key To Success

11 Supplemental Material

Notes & Resources

We reviewed Forrester's most recent research in the customer service and CRM solutions space. We also analyzed our most recent inquiries from customer service solution buyers and users as well as information from vendors, industry analysts, and the media.

Related Research Documents

[The Forrester Wave™: Customer Service Solutions For Enterprise Organizations, Q4 2015](#)

[TechRadar™ For AD&D Pros: Contact Center Solutions For Customer Service, Q1 2015](#)

[Your Customers Don't Want To Call You](#)

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

Differentiated Service Delivers Potential For Top-Line Growth

In today's world, customers decide how customer-centric a company is. Good customer service should capture the fundamentals of a great experience: ease, effectiveness, and emotion.¹ For many companies, this level of service is a cornerstone of their customer experience strategy, and good customer experiences can help control costs. But their potential for sustainable top-line growth garners more interest from company executives. As a result, customer service technology is high on the list of investment priorities this year.²

We can all tell stories about poor customer service, either from firsthand experience or from accounts that have gone viral. For example, Comcast put a customer who was trying to cancel his account on hold for more than 3 hours until the contact center closed for the day. Sprint told a customer calling about an unusual charge that "it [was] policy and [the customer did] not need any further explanation." AD&D pros: These firms ignore a key customer service tenet — your customers now decide how customer-centric you must be — at their own peril.

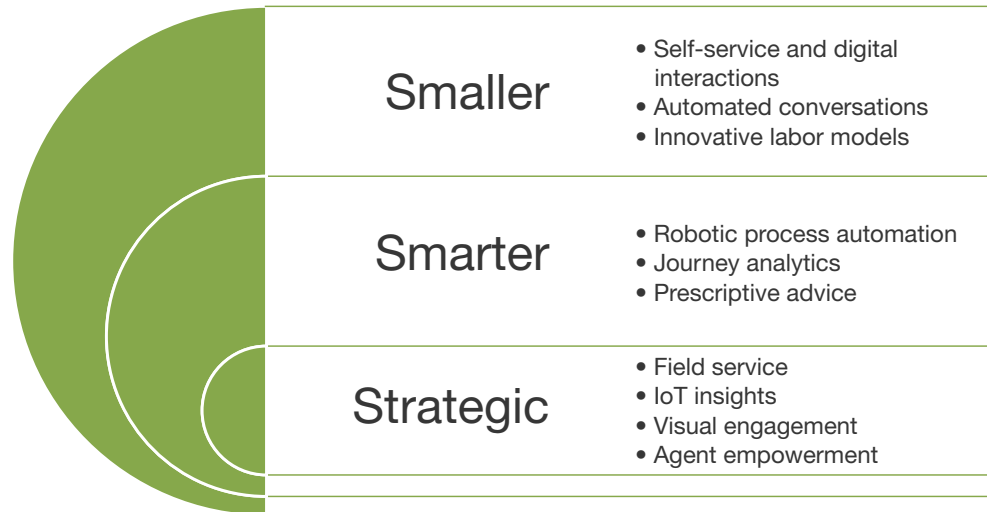
The Ever-Changing Customer Service Technology Ecosystem Creates Value And Risk

The customer service technology ecosystem has grown more complex over time. In 2016, for example, chatbots and messaging were the hot topics but have yet to prove broad value for customer service organizations.³ This, in combination with a constant stream of vendor mergers and acquisitions, creates risks for customer service planners.⁴ In addition, the various organizations that own customer service touchpoints historically have not shared the same objectives, reporting structures, funding, business processes, data management strategies, technology, or culture.⁵

Looking ahead, Forrester sees 10 trends for 2017 that AD&D professionals supporting customer service operations should take into account as they move the needle on the quality of service that they deliver (see Figure 1).

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

FIGURE 1 Top Customer Service Trends For 2017**Traditional contact centers become:****Customer Service Operations Morph As Customers Self-Serve**

Customer service organizations address a smaller volume of simple voice-based customer contacts as they mature their self-service, automated engagement, and digital operations. So not surprising, Pizza Hut closed a large call center in 2016, which supported restaurants across the country, as ordering and service moved online.⁶ Jennifer Lyons, the spokeswoman of the Japanese electronics maker Ricoh, commented on the closure of the firm's US-based contact centers, "Today many customers are accessing information online, which has significantly reduced our customer service call volumes."⁷ AD&D pros should watch for:

- › **Trend No. 1: Companies extend and enhance self-service.** Customers of all ages are moving away from using the phone to using self-service — web and mobile self-service, communities, virtual agents, automated chat dialogs, or chatbots — as a first point of contact with a company (see Figure 2). Dimension Data reports growth in every digital channel and a 12% decrease in phone volume.⁸ Forrester data shows that two-fifths of US online adults prefer to use digital customer service rather than speak with a live person on the phone.⁹ This is a win-win: Customers receive service with less friction, and companies contain costs by deflecting agent-assisted interactions.

In 2017: Customer service will continue to invest in structured knowledge management and leverage communities to extend the reach of curated content. Service will become more ubiquitous, via speech interfaces, devices with embedded knowledge (e.g., Xerox's printers), and

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

wearables for service technicians.¹⁰ Emerging cognitive engagement solutions will take input, learn from that input with human assistance, put the content into context, and make relevant evidence-based recommendations.¹¹

- › **Trend No. 2: Companies sustain automated customer conversations.** Customers need to ask questions in natural language. But they also want to sustain a conversation. Close to half of consumers use introductory versions of intelligent agents like Siri and Alexa to do this with varying success. Emerging intelligent agents for customer service span a range of capabilities, from single-purpose chatbots (e.g., KLM’s chatbot to communicate booking confirmations) to virtual agents that embed deep learning to make them smarter over time.

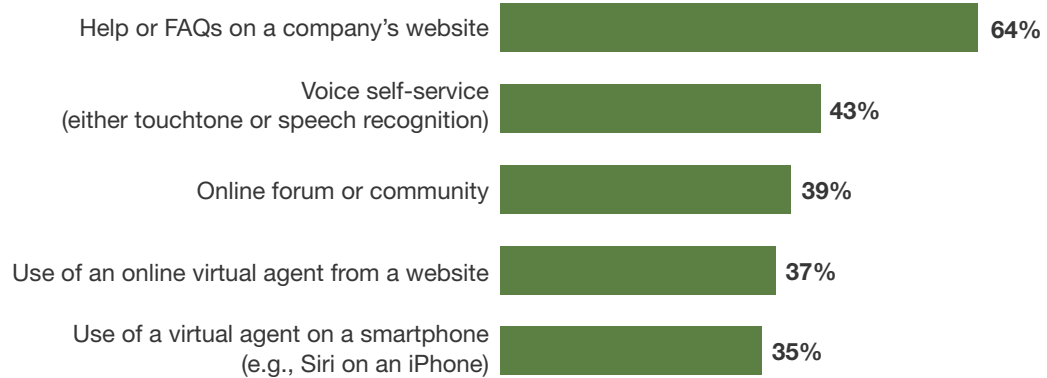
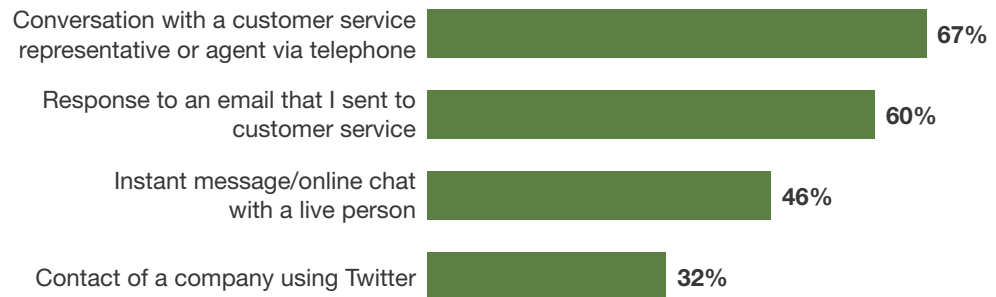
In 2017: Companies will continue to explore the power of intelligent agents to add conversational interfaces to static self-service content. They will anticipate needs by context, preferences, and prior queries and will deliver proactive alerts, relevant offers, or content. They will additionally become smarter over time via embedded artificial intelligence. Companies will also increasingly use linguistic expertise to design for real back-and-forth human conversations that solve problems and will integrate agents into existing agent-assisted channels so that conversations can escalate without loss of context.

- › **Trend No. 3: Companies explore new customer service labor models.** Outsourced customer service operations require the alignment of not only people and skills but also the business processes and technology infrastructure of the provider and those of the enterprise. Many companies outsource to fill gaps in language skills and seasonal capacity. They also outsource service requests that are not mission-critical and have limited impact on the company’s brand. In 2016, 42% of respondents to a survey said that they were “very interested” in outsourcing, and another 36% said that they were “interested” in outsourcing some or all of their contact center seats.¹²

In 2017: Companies will focus on more innovative models to meet real-time demand for agents. Pinterest and Airbnb use freelance or gig-economy workers who route service requests to workers by skill, reputation, and immediate availability.¹³ iCracked operates a network of freelance technicians who fix people’s broken phones and tablets onsite.¹⁴ These models allow companies to tune costs by quickly reacting to demand and offer better customer experiences by instantly connecting to an expert or providing service personnel that come to the customer instead of the other way around.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

FIGURE 2 Customers Increasingly Self-Serve As A First Point Of Contact For Customer Service**Percent of US online adults who have used the following customer service channels in the past 12 months****Self-service channels****Live-assist channels**

Base: 4,622 US online adults (ages 18+)

Source: Forrester's Consumer Technographics® North American Retail And Travel Customer Life Cycle Survey, Q1 2016 (US)

Customer Service Operations Become Smarter

Customer service needs to get smarter by delivering the right service experience — either self-service or agent-assisted — to the right user at the right time within the cost constraints and customer experience goals of the company. We see the following trends in this area:

› **Trend No. 4: Robotic process automation guidance will standardize service delivery.**

Companies now realize value from robotic process automation (RPA).¹⁵ RPA software robots perform routine business processes and make simple decisions by mimicking the way that agents

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

interact with applications through a user interface.¹⁶ Companies can automate entire end-to-end processes such as account onboarding or insurance claims awards, with humans typically only managing exceptions.¹⁷

In 2017: Expect to see continued focus on RPA for automating repetitive rules-based tasks. Companies will explore the nascent world of cognitive RPA to drive real business value by improving nonroutine tasks requiring judgment. They include natural language processing and building active learning into RPA trigger points where the bot can reprogram itself via feedback. For example, a global bank uses cognitive RPA to monitor employee digital communications for indicators of noncompliant activities; performance managers can use cognitive RPA to autoscore agent performance evaluations, leaving more time for coaching (see Figure 3).

- › **Trend No. 5: Journey analytics equip companies to better support customer goals.** Customers expect consistent service experiences across touchpoints. They expect to start an interaction in one channel and complete it in another without having to repeat themselves.¹⁸ In a recent survey, 25% of companies said that improving cross-channel customer experiences was a step to improving customer experience in the coming year.¹⁹

In 2017: Forward-thinking companies will actively analyze customer feedback across departmental silos to find and fix cross-channel issues. They will also design journeys to guide customers to the right channels by their inquiry and use journey analytics to understand customers' behaviors across channels, enabling them to contextually engage with customers. The outcomes of this analysis will allow them to pinpoint common customer paths, estimate the frequency of operational bottlenecks, and determine which combinations of interactions will lead to desired business results — like better customer experiences.

- › **Trend No. 6: Prescriptive advice powers offers, decisions, and connections.** Decisioning — automatically deciding a customer's or system's next action — is pervasive in customer service organizations. Rules route interactions to the right resource or recommend answers to customer questions. Many organizations use a combination of rules and analytics to present personalized cross-sell and upsell offers to customers. But organizations fall short on leveraging the true power of analytics. They often don't understand customer segments, typical journeys, the events that triggered a service interaction, and their best resolution.

In 2017: Organizations will continue to extend the power of analytics to prescribe the right set of steps for customers or agents to more effectively service customers. This includes correlating online behavior with requests for service or suggesting changes to agent schedules via contact center forecasts. They will learn to better route a customer to an agent who can most effectively answer a question, which they base on past success. They will also push the right next steps using customers' current behavior to help preempt future calls.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

FIGURE 3 Cognitive Robotic Process Automation Will Extend The Power Of Rules-Based Robots

	Rules-based RPA	Cognitive RPA
Suitability	Repetitive rules-based tasks that make simple decisions that are based on well-defined inputs	Tasks that require consideration, such as exception management, with target scenarios being varied and lower-volume
Use	Front- and back-office scenarios that broadly apply to customer service for desktop consolidation, data entry, event monitoring, and process automation	Targeted scenarios that deliver meaningful, insightful output and require extensive knowledge for machine training that may be difficult to obtain
Maturity	Reaching maturity	Emerging
Cost	Low: Robots can be easily and quickly deployed.	High: ROI takes months to achieve, but it can transform productivity.

Customer Service Operations Become More Strategic

Today customers use self-service for straightforward interactions, leaving complex issues like account closure or claims disputes for a phone conversation. These questions often take longer to resolve and are opportunities to build positive customer relationships.²⁰ Customer service organizations must look out for customers' best interests and support their emotional state. For example, Delta Air Lines supports customers when they receive notice about a cancelled flight. Its interactive voice response (IVR) system can tell when the caller ID field matches a mobile phone that recently received a cancellation notice via text message. It skips the standard menu in favor of one context-aware question: "Are you calling about the text message we just sent you?"

- › **Trend No. 7: Field service becomes the face of your company.** These customer interactions are by far the most personal channel for customer engagement, and they can make or break a relationship. Successful field service technologies empower customers to control the service experience by engaging with a tech on their timetable and their terms. They can fuel differentiated customer experiences by equipping the technician with the right customer information, parts, and knowledge to get the job done in one visit.

In 2017: Expect to see continued focus on using field service technologies outside of traditional industries. These technologies will increasingly leverage analytics to manage scheduling and dispatching, taking into account skills, tasks, work orders, assets, time sheets, and service policies. They will explore augmented reality (AR), which overlays digital information on the physical world

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

and helps companies spread that knowledge more effectively. Smart glasses, for instance, will allow senior technicians or a contact center to lead junior employees — or even customers — through maintenance or repairs.²¹

- › **Trend No. 8: IoT insights transform business models.** Today 25% of firms use internet of things (IoT), and another 27% plan to do so within a year.²² Companies use support automation to preemptively diagnose and fix issues from connected devices. For example, Tesla Motors pushes software patches to connected cars. Connected iRobots self-register and order new parts when they fail.²³ Commercial lighting provider WLS Lighting Systems remotely dims mall parking-lot lights by looking at use. Preemptive service wins on all fronts: faster resolution at lower cost, better planning, and anticipation of future customer needs.

In 2017: IoT will continue to transform companies from being product-based to service-based. Heavy equipment manufacturer Caterpillar already includes a remote monitoring service as part of its business offering. Trane and Carrier also offer cold-air-as-a-service instead of requiring building owners to buy chillers.²⁴ To make the business model of IoT work, companies must keep a close eye on emerging IoT ecosystem components, networking protocols, security, data models, and analytics to connect with contact center solutions and act on the received triggers.²⁵

- › **Trend No. 9: Visual engagement strengthens the customer bond.** Customers expect to get service at any point in their prepurchase, onboarding, and post-purchase journey and to have companies value their time. Companies use cobrowsing with annotation to effectively help customers navigate complex forms. They also use video to cut through the friction of explaining complex situations like satellite TV providers and ISPs do to support their customers remotely. In fact, one company decreased its truck rolls by 30% during a recent pilot and is now rolling out video capabilities to 1,000 contact center agents.

In 2017: Companies will leverage visual engagement to strengthen customer relationships in a digital world. This boosts onboarding success (e.g., an audio equipment provider helping customers set up complex products) or generates revenue by counseling purchasers (e.g., BluCurrent Credit Union's video banking offering).²⁶ They will use video to read customers' facial expressions and react to signs of frustration or anger, displaying this information to agents for better engagement.²⁷

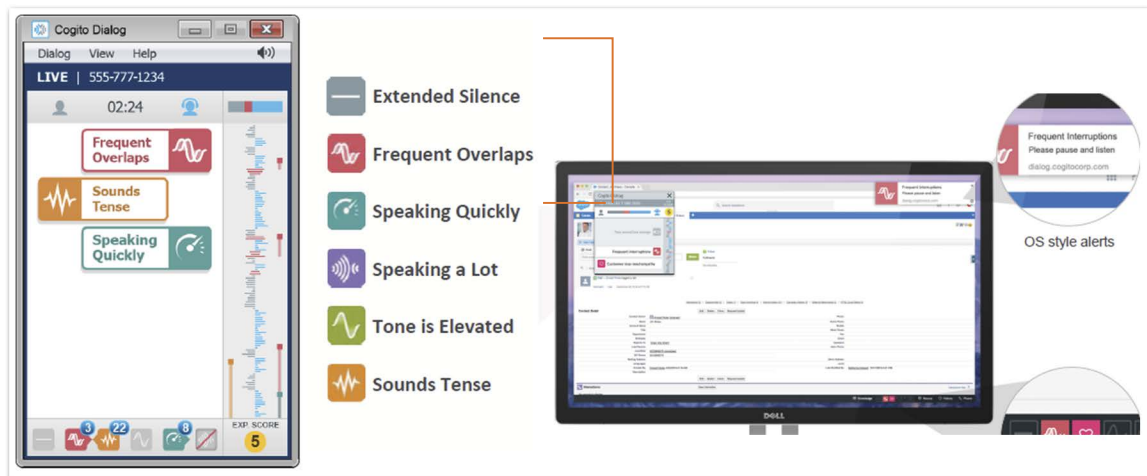
- › **Trend No. 10: Emerging analytics technologies empower agents.** Companies use text analytics to extract themes in data from digital interactions and surveys that would be impossible to retrieve manually. They monitor the quality of phone calls using speech analytics, typically after the call, with the aspiration to do so in real time. They also use these solutions to extract emotional insights by mining keywords, volume, pitch, speed, and other language patterns to detect changes in sentiment and intensity during the course of a conversation.

In 2017: Companies will use a variety of emerging technical approaches to assist agents in providing more empathetic and compassionate experiences to customers. They will leverage behavioral analytics to match a caller's psychographic profile to the best-skilled agent for serving

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

that customer's personality type. And they will explore speech-based IVRs to route calls directly to supervisors when they sense mounting frustration in a customer's voice. They will leverage behavioral science, coupled with intelligence, to provide live speaking guidance to agents during sophisticated and emotional conversations (see Figure 4). This technology will coach the agent in real time to show genuine care and empathy using, for example, the tone and inflection of the agent's voice and the speed of the conversation.

FIGURE 4 Voice Analysis Guides An Agent's Flow Of Conversation

Source: Cogito

Recommendations**Pragmatic Execution Is The Key To Success**

As companies selectively undertake customer service projects to move the needle on the quality of service that they deliver, a solid business case and flawless execution remain critically important.²⁸ AD&D pros supporting customer service must:

- › **Understand the customer.** Your company surveys customers to pinpoint current pain points and does customer research to discover customers' needs.²⁹ Get access to this data, and use it to formulate your technology plans.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

- › **Audit the customer service ecosystem.** Perform a thorough audit of the customer service technologies that you use as well as the processes that you support across the different communication channels. Understand the maturity of the technologies that you have, using Forrester's TechRadar research to guide you.³⁰ And pinpoint newer technologies and business process changes to deliver a better customer service experience.
- › **Pinpoint the best opportunities for improving customer service.** Assess your operations against best practices, and identify areas of opportunity. Use Forrester's best practices framework for customer service, which defines the critical capabilities for building high-quality customer service experiences that align with customers' expectations.³¹
- › **Build a sound business case.** Be pragmatic in choosing projects to tackle. Build a sound business case using Forrester's Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) methodology to justify your initiative. Then follow best practices in executing your changes.³²
- › **Incorporate feedback loops.** Continually measure the success of customer service interactions against cost and satisfaction goals. Look for ways to evolve customer service so that it stays aligned with your company's overarching goals and mission.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

Engage With An Analyst

Gain greater confidence in your decisions by working with Forrester thought leaders to apply our research to your specific business and technology initiatives.

Analyst Inquiry

To help you put research into practice, connect with an analyst to discuss your questions in a 30-minute phone session — or opt for a response via email.

[Learn more.](#)

Analyst Advisory

Translate research into action by working with an analyst on a specific engagement in the form of custom strategy sessions, workshops, or speeches.

[Learn more.](#)

Webinar

Join our online sessions on the latest research affecting your business. Each call includes analyst Q&A and slides and is available on-demand.

[Learn more.](#)



Forrester's research apps for iPhone® and iPad®

Stay ahead of your competition no matter where you are.

Supplemental Material

Survey Methodology

The Forrester's Consumer Technographics® North American Retail And Travel Customer Life Cycle Survey, Q1 2016 (US), was fielded in February 2016. This online survey included 4,622 respondents in the US between the ages of 18 and 88. For results based on a randomly chosen sample of this size, there is 95% confidence that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 1.4% of what they would be if the entire population of US online adults (defined as those online weekly or more often) had been surveyed.

Forrester weighted the data by age, gender, region, and income to demographically represent the US online adult population. The survey sample size, when weighted, was 4,622. (Note: Weighted sample sizes can be different from the actual number of respondents to account for individuals generally underrepresented in online panels.) GMI fielded this survey on behalf of Forrester.

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

Endnotes

- ¹ The ideal customer experience isn't just good for customers — it has to deliver revenue for the business too. Forrester's Customer Experience Index (CX Index™) measures the fundamentals of a great experience: effectiveness, ease, and emotion. See the Forrester report "[Introducing Forrester's Next-Generation Customer Experience Index.](#)"
- ² When asked which departments or business groups their firm is focusing on as it considers its software strategy and investments, 47% of global software decision-makers say IT/technology, 27% say information security, 19% say sales, and 18% say customer service. Source: Forrester's Global Business Technographics Software Survey, 2016.
- ³ Emerging technologies, such as virtual agents and chatbots, will drive a company's competitive differentiation through customer service. See the Forrester report "[Plan Now For Customer Service In 2021.](#)"
- ⁴ In recent years, there has been continued consolidation and turmoil in the customer service solutions landscape. Vendors have acquired direct competitors to fill in gaps in their offerings. More importantly, vendors have acquired companies in adjacent spaces to broaden their customer engagement management capabilities and offerings. See the Forrester report "[The Forrester Wave™: Customer Service Solutions For Enterprise Organizations, Q4 2015.](#)"
- ⁵ Siloed governance processes around applications, business units, and channels are a root cause of poor customer service. See the Forrester report "[Better Governance Leads To Better Customer Service — Yes, Really!.](#)"
- ⁶ NPC International, the Pizza Hut franchisee that operates the East Sunshine Street call center, attributed the move to a change in pizza-ordering habits. Source: Thomas Gounley, "Springfield call center closes abruptly, citing pizza ordering habits," Springfield News-Leader, August 12, 2015 (<http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2015/08/12/springfield-call-center-closes-abruptly-citing-pizza-ordering-habits/31577123/>).
- ⁷ Source: Mike Sunnucks, "2 big global companies closing Arizona call centers, cutting jobs," Phoenix Business Journal, September 22, 2016 (<http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news/2016/09/22/2-big-global-companies-closing-arizona-call.html>).
- ⁸ Source: Dimension Data (<http://dimensiondatacx.com/>).
- ⁹ Forty-one percent of US online adults said that they would prefer to use digital customer service rather than speak with a live person on a phone. Source: Forrester's Consumer Technographics North American Retail And Travel Customer Life Cycle Survey, Q1 2016 (US).
- ¹⁰ Xerox embeds a knowledge base within its internet-connected devices. Xerox continually monitors the performance of these devices and makes real-time performance information available. When an issue occurs, Xerox customers can troubleshoot via content that is proactively pushed to the small screen on a device as well as accessible via a PC or mobile phone. See the Forrester report "[Vendor Landscape: Knowledge Management For Customer Engagement.](#)"
- ¹¹ Cognitive engagement solutions augment peoples' capabilities, scale knowledge capability, and automate repeatable activities. Cognitive systems are creeping into commercial relevance beginning with high-end customer engagement applications in financial services, healthcare, and retail and will become ubiquitous in mainstream scenarios as IoT matures. See the Forrester report "[Welcome To The World Of Watson Engagement Advisor.](#)"
- ¹² Source: Forrester's Global Business Technographics Networks And Telecommunications Survey, 2016.
- ¹³ Airbnb and Pinterest use Directly. Directly identifies and routes customer service issues and questions that community experts can resolve. Source: Directly (<http://www.directly.com>).
- ¹⁴ iCracked operates a network of iTechs, who are technicians specializing in the professional repair of iOS and Samsung products. Customers seeking repair services can go to the company website, enter their location, and identify their issue. iTechs are notified and respond to the customer, setting up a meeting at the customer's site. Source: iCracked (<https://www.icracked.com/>).
- ¹⁵ See the Forrester report "[Digitization Leaders Share Robotic Process Automation Best Practices.](#)"

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

¹⁶ An example of a routine business process would be the retrieval of information from one system and input of the same information into another system or activation of another system function.

¹⁷ RPA use cases can span front and back offices. See the Forrester report "[Digitization Leaders Share Robotic Process Automation Best Practices.](#)"

¹⁸ Sixty-three percent agree with the statement, "I would like to be able to move between customer service channels and not have to repeat my situation every time." Source: Forrester's Consumer Technographics North American Retail And Travel Customer Life Cycle Survey, Q1 2016 (US).

¹⁹ Source: Forrester's Global Business Technographics Priorities And Journey Survey, 2016.

²⁰ Not every company needs great customer experience (CX). In some cases, good CX may be enough. But it's getting harder to even achieve "good" CX consistently. As companies scale, employees have to coordinate to deliver products and services via many channels. The often-haphazard CX management (CXM) approach of the past won't cut it anymore, but many CX pros aren't sure what to do differently. Forrester's CXM maturity model answers that question. It spells out the activities, processes, and habits that define mature CXM in the age of the customer. For more information, see the Forrester report "[The Customer Experience Management Maturity Model.](#)"

²¹ Mobile AR is a tool that digital business professionals are beginning to use to engage consumers. Today, AR simplifies how consumers discover and consume content. For more information, see the Forrester report "[Augmented Reality: Emerging Tools To Explore.](#)"

²² Forrester surveyed 3,289 global enterprise telecom decision-makers in business and technology across 10 countries. Source: Forrester's Global Business Technographics Networks And Telecommunications Survey, 2016.

²³ Source: "Improve Customer Satisfaction and Retention; Maximize Efficiency," Oracle Cloud (<https://cloud.oracle.com/opc/saas/whitepapers/rightnow-customer-stories-wp.pdf>).

²⁴ IoT will transform the post-purchase experience. Usage data from IoT sensors gives rich context for customers to reach out to peers and social networks in the ask phase. The rich data flows and interactivity of IoT-connected products will transform the engage stage, as customers and companies continuously communicate about the customer's experience. See the Forrester report "[Brief: The Internet Of Things Will Transform Customer Engagement.](#)"

²⁵ The IoT trend features a common idea of network-connected digital sensors and actuators but lacks any core common technology or a universal killer app. AD&D pros can use a wide range of technologies to deploy specific end-to-end use cases, plus many industry-specific technologies. See the Forrester report "[Brief: Bringing Interoperability To The Internet Of Things](#)" and see the Forrester report "[TechRadar™: Internet Of Things, Q1 2016.](#)"

²⁶ BluCurrent Credit Union uses Vidyo to offer personalized customer service experiences so that customers can connect with subject matter experts who best suits their needs. Source: "BluCurrent Credit Union Selects Vidyo to Provide High-Quality, Personalized Video Banking Services," Vidyo press release, June 28, 2016 (<http://www.vidyo.com/company/news-and-events/press-releases/blucurrent-credit-union-selects-vidyo/>).

²⁷ Companies like Affectiva, RealEyes, and Sensory Logic offer tools to capture a user's facial expression. These tools use algorithms and stores of past data to infer the person's emotion. See the Forrester report "[Understanding The Impact Of Emotion On Customer Experience.](#)"

²⁸ Forrester's playbook about contact centers for customer service outlines four steps for AD&D professionals who want to optimize and innovate with customer service operations: 1) discover: establishing the value of customer service; 2) plan: setting the right strategy; 3) act: executing the strategy with precision; and 4) optimize: measuring and improving operations. See the Forrester report "[Transform The Contact Center For Customer Service Excellence.](#)"

²⁹ Companies can use research, however, to find out what customers' needs are and then design experiences to meet those needs. For example, Emirates researched how customers wanted to feel after a flight and found that "refreshed" was the overriding emotion, which it used to evolve its flight experience. See the Forrester report "[Anchor Your CX Strategy In Customer Understanding.](#)"

2017 Customer Service Trends: Operations Become Smarter And More Strategic

Vision: The Contact Centers For Customer Service Playbook

- ³⁰ Forrester uses the TechRadar methodology to make projections for more than a decade into the future of the use of technologies in a given category. We make these predictions using the best available information at a given point in time. Forrester intends to update its TechRadar assessments on a regular schedule to assess the impact of future technical innovation, changing customer and end user demand, and the emergence of new complementary organizations and business models. See the Forrester report “[TechRadar™ For AD&D Pros: Contact Center Solutions For Customer Service, Q1 2015.](#)”
- ³¹ Use Forrester’s best practices framework and assessment tool for customer service to understand how your organization stacks up against more than 150 best practices that drive customer retention, customer loyalty, reduced cost, and increased revenue. Use the framework to define strategy, gain executive buy-in, build stakeholder consensus, manage customer service agents more effectively, and select the right technologies for loyalty-creating customer experiences. See the Forrester report “[Assess Customer Service Capabilities To Pinpoint Opportunities For Better Service.](#)”
- ³² Forrester’s TEI methodology helps customer service leaders make better decisions by helping them quantify, communicate, and realize the complete business value of a technology investment. See the Forrester report “[Win Funding For Your Customer Service Project.](#)”

We work with business and technology leaders to develop customer-obsessed strategies that drive growth.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- › Core research and tools
- › Data and analytics
- › Peer collaboration
- › Analyst engagement
- › Consulting
- › Events

Forrester's research and insights are tailored to your role and critical business initiatives.

ROLES WE SERVE

Marketing & Strategy Professionals

CMO
B2B Marketing
B2C Marketing
Customer Experience
Customer Insights
eBusiness & Channel Strategy

Technology Management Professionals

CIO
› Application Development & Delivery
Enterprise Architecture
Infrastructure & Operations
Security & Risk
Sourcing & Vendor Management

Technology Industry Professionals

Analyst Relations

CLIENT SUPPORT

For information on hard-copy or electronic reprints, please contact Client Support at +1 866-367-7378, +1 617-613-5730, or clientsupport@forrester.com. We offer quantity discounts and special pricing for academic and nonprofit institutions.