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The Guide to Delivering a True Omnichannel Customer Experience

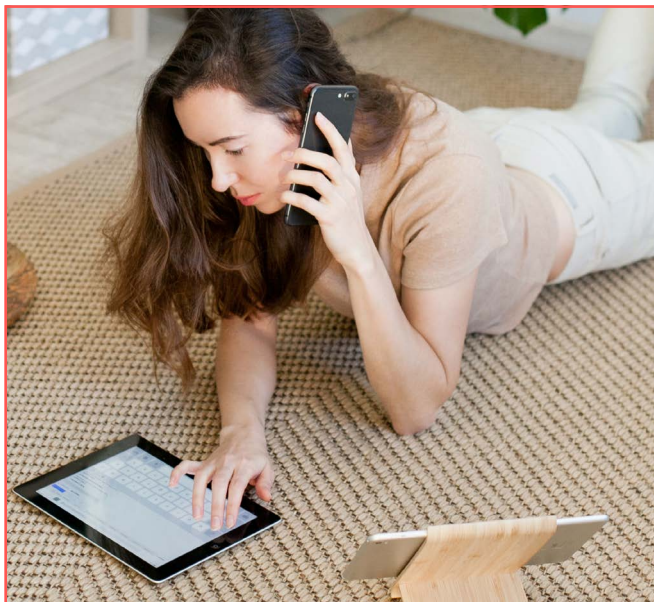Servicing Customers in the
New Omnichannel Economy

We are living in a world of instant gratification. Customers want what they want, and they want it now. What this means in the world of customer service, is that brands must immediately recognize customer needs and deliver high-quality results on their channel of choice. But what happens when customers switch channels? Do customer service organizations deliver consistent experiences across all channels? Do they pick up where the customer left off? Do they have to start over from scratch with a new agent?

Brands are doing their part to make themselves widely available, but many struggle to implement a service strategy that truly meets customers on their terms at all times. This type of customer-centric strategy, one that drives customer satisfaction and loyalty in lieu of simply resolving issues one by one, can only be achieved through true omnichannel support.

But the concept of omnichannel CX has been watered down. It's more than simply communicating with customers on every channel. True omnichannel support ensures seamless transitions and consistent experiences from one channel to the next. Companies providing true omnichannel support are collecting and harnessing the information gained through every interaction, across channels, to drive stronger, more meaningful customer relationships, increase revenue streams, and improve operational performance.

Read on to learn about the power of true omnichannel support, and how your business can achieve it.
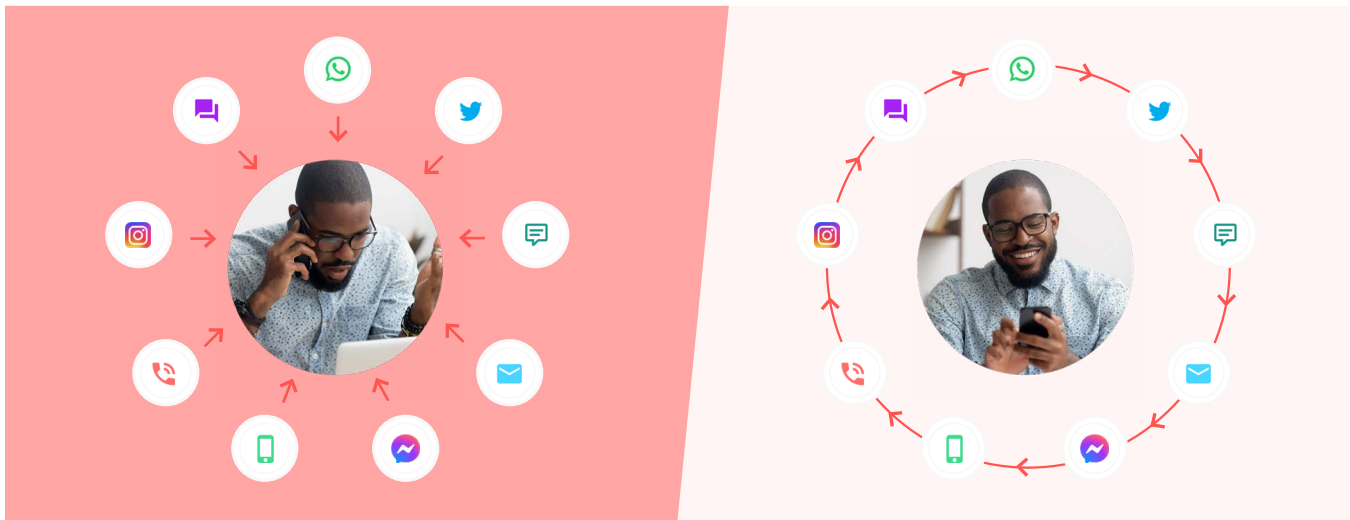
Table of Contents

79%
of consumers report getting frustrated when they can't contact customer service through their preferred medium or platform

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# Multichannel vs. Omnichannel: What's the Big Difference?

Let's clear the air — multichannel support is not omnichannel support. Unfortunately, the two terms have almost become interchangeable, with many companies conflating the two. Multichannel support simply means offering customers more than one method for contacting customer service, whether that's chat, phone, social or e-mail.

In a multichannel support environment each channel lives in its own silo with its own dedicated team of agents. In this environment, there is limited communication or sharing of information between channels. Most of the time, when a customer contacts a company, the team manning that channel will create a ticket. If the customer then contacts the company through a different channel about the same issue a second ticket will be created with each team working their respective tickets. For example, if a customer had spoken to an agent first on chat and then via e-mail,

the chat team and e-mail team would have no record of each other's conversations with the customer.

As a result of this fragmented experience, customers will have to take the time to repeat to the second agent what they told the first agent, creating extra effort and prolonging the resolution time of each customer inquiry. Multichannel support leads companies to focus on resolving tickets, rather than building stronger customer relationships, because agents lack a holistic view of each customer.

Omnichannel support, by comparison, shifts perspective from ticket resolution to customer relationship building. Customers have the freedom to move between channels throughout their engagement, and are guaranteed consistency, so each conversation starts where the last ended.
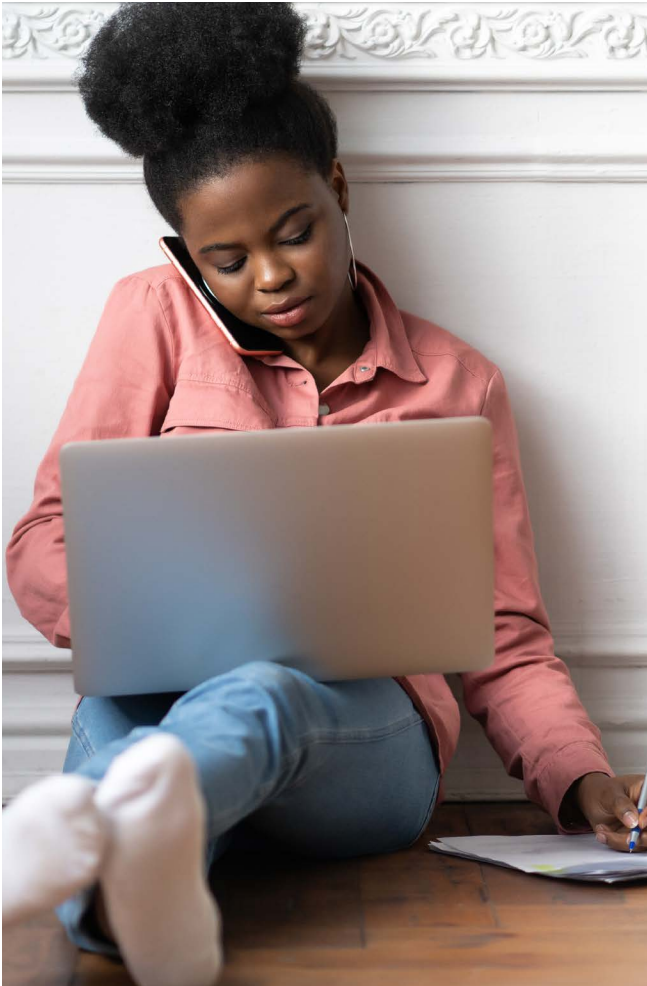
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4 Placing each customer in touch with the most appropriate resource as quickly as possible to ensure consistency and quality

5 Agents to have a real-time view into the conversations that occur on all the available channels, so they have context of the issue, without needing the customer to repeat any information

Omnichannel support, if executed properly, provides a consistent experience for customers at every touchpoint, no matter the channel, or where they are in the buyer journey. Unfortunately, many companies struggle to create this type of service environment because sharing data between channels and platforms takes a technological overhaul. But the benefits far outweigh the costs, and the right omnichannel strategy will succeed by maximizing the resources you have without overextending them.

KUSTOMER TIP:

As you kick off your omnichannel strategy, don't feel limited to designing around the current channels your company supports. Companies that deliver great customer service inevitably scale, requiring them to adapt to the needs of their growing customer base as well as the creation of new channels. This likely means adding more channels, so it's best to ensure that new channels will seamlessly fit into any omnichannel strategy you create.

## True omnichannel support is possible for any company, and requires:

1 Being available on any channel the customer wants to use

2 A customer-centric not ticket-centric approach to support

3 The ability to freely move across channels throughout a single conversation

How Omnichannel CX Can Benefit Your Business

Implementing an omnichannel support strategy means you're setting a course to meet the demands of the modern consumer. It means you're prioritizing their time and capitalizing on every connection they make with your brand in order to better understand their needs and prepare for future interactions. And — importantly — it means you're considering future revenue opportunities.

## Preventing Agent Collision Drives Consistent Resolution

Agent collision, when more than one agent services the customer at the same time, is far too common in a multichannel, siloed support strategy, inevitably frustrating and confusing customers. As mentioned earlier, if a customer switches channels during an inquiry about the same issue, the different channels view each point of contact as a new ticket, so two different agents end up managing the same customer and same issue. It gets especially tricky if these agents provide two different resolutions to the same issue.

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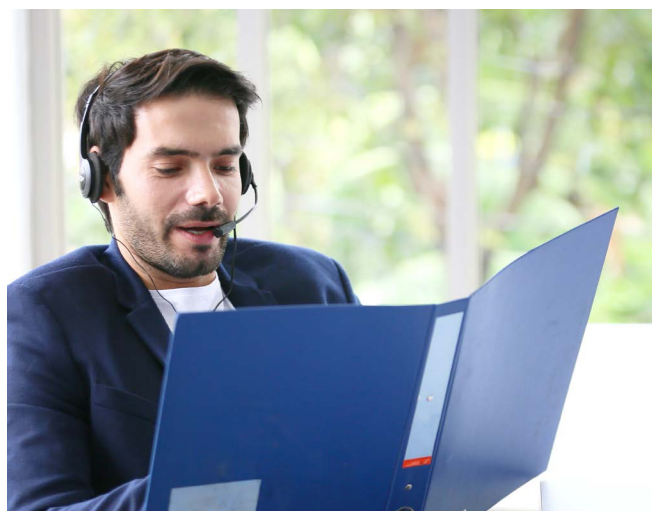
In an omnichannel support strategy, agent collision never occurs. Communication channels are integrated, so an agents can view the conversation and maintain context even as they engage through multiple channels. A single answer to the issue or question at hand is all but certain, and the consistency of the experience keeps customers from becoming frustrated and switching to the competition.

50%
of consumers have been given contradictory information when contacting customer service
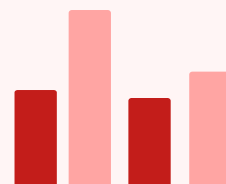
Consistency in Support Creates Loyalty and Increases Lifetime Value

By experiencing consistently positive and helpful outcomes that require less effort, customers anticipate that future experiences with your company will be just as seamless, **increasing loyalty** and paving the way for **future business**. As customer interactions become more frequent and their sentiment toward your brand increases, a virtuous cycle of positive interactions occurs that leads to additional sales.

50%
of consumers have been given incorrect information when contacting customer service

Improving Operations and Customer Experience

A true omnichannel strategy also helps companies better understand their customers with every interaction, as that data remains tethered to the customer rather than the ticket. By incorporating data from other systems, agents now have a holistic view of each customer's journey on a single screen. Agents are empowered to deliver personalized, consistent service across channels without having to switch between different systems, which ultimately reduces handle times while increasing satisfaction. In addition, companies can use the unified channel data to optimize customer routing, like sending inbound inquiries to an agent they have spoken to before, or one that is best equipped to resolve their specific problem instantly.

64%

of consumers have had to repeat information multiple times when contacting customer service

## Operationalizing Omnichannel Support

In order to operationalize omnichannel support, your organization may need to go through a technological overhaul, but also a cultural one. If you're planning to create an environment of consistent, integrated service across all channels, you must pay careful consideration to your team's ability to succeed.

Omnichannel support is a two-way street. While the end-goal is to meet your customers' needs, your agents are responsible for executing the strategy you set in place. Your support team needs your company to account for their time, capacity, and sanity, so planning around their needs is essential to a successful omnichannel approach.

Hi there!
Could you please provide me with my shipping confirmation?

Hello!
I seem to be missing a burner from the stove I recently purcased, could you assist?

Hi Chris!
Yes! Your stove should arrive this Saturday.
Tracking: #12879487200000

Hello Chris!
I'm sorry to hear that! I have ordered you a new burner, you should get it in 2-3 business days. Please do not hesitat to reach out if you need anything else.

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Consider Segmenting Your Agents Based on Skills Not Channels

An omnichannel approach can allow you to organize your team by their strengths and skills, not by the channels your customers leverage. This will lead to increased first contact resolution, as you are now routing customers to agents that are better prepared to handle the conversation.
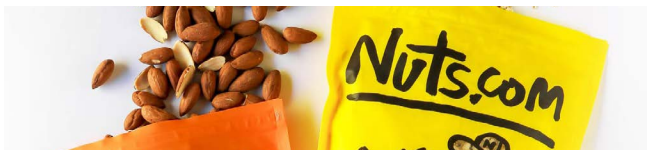
IN ACTION | CASE STUDY

Nuts.com

Using Kustomer's Timeline view, snack food company Nuts.com can see a detailed profile of every customer's journey — this includes all customer touchpoints such as e-mails, social interactions and specific customer notes. This gives Nuts.com agents the real-time customer data they need to not only provide more efficient service, but also deliver a better customer experience that leads to higher repeat business.

Kustomer also gives the Nuts.com team the ability to customize attributes around customers and orders to directly route customers to CX agents who can address their questions with a personal touch. "We can now connect customers with agents who face the same dietary restrictions, building a connection that creates customers for life," said Erica Gutierrez, Customer Experience Manager at Nuts.com.

Enable Collaborative Support

Agents are not the only line of defense when handling customers. Plenty of other roles and departments might have the necessary answers, depending on the inquiry.

Granting agents the ability to easily loop in others, whether it's the accounting department regarding a billing issue, or the legal department over a contract dispute, is the secret ingredient to a true omnichannel experience. Customers aren't only free to seek the help they need from their desired channel, but proper resolution is guaranteed, because any and all sources of knowledge can be part of the conversation.

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Harness Your Customer Data to Deliver Contextualized, Insightful Support

While customer-centricity requires giving customers a certain amount of control throughout every interaction, omnichannel support is not nearly as valuable unless your company harnesses its customer data. And how (or whether) that data is captured, stored, and leveraged can make the difference between standard customer service and true omnichannel support.

Your customer data is powerful, but it often lives in other disparate systems making it a challenge to provide a complete picture of your customers. You need to implement a support solution that unifies that data and makes it easily available and actionable for your support team. And since your omnichannel strategy connects all your channels, data on customer interactions travels with the customer and moves as easily between channels as they do, making for a complete and seamless collection of customer-centric information.

This data consolidation has a significant impact on the type of omnichannel support your agents can offer. Data provides the necessary historical context of each customer's past with your brand, equipping agents with a means to deliver a personalized and even proactive approach that makes customers feel recognized and valued.

IN ACTION | CASE STUDY
The Farmer's Dog

"With Kustomer, we're able to open a conversation and instantly pull up a customer's entire Timeline, equipping our team with the necessary context to deliver a personalized support experience. Custom objects and automated workflows aid in driving efficiency and higher service levels needed for both agents and customers."

- Molly Garraway, Sr. Manager of
Customer Experience, The Farmer's Dog

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Use AI to Improve and Augment Customer and Agent Experiences

Inevitably, many companies struggle to balance capacity across their support team as the business grows, resulting in excessive wait times that frustrate customers and stress out agents.

The customer data you collect across channels can help optimize routing decisions by matching customers with the most appropriate agent. AI technology can take the data and help automate those routing workflows. You can then add in a machine learning algorithm that will enable those workflows to adjust in the future without human intervention. Additionally, AI can power incredibly accurate self-service tools like chatbots when they have access to historical, ommnichannel customer data. Low level inquiries like questions around order status can be resolved without the need for agent intervention.

The result? Agents are less stressed, acutely focused on satisfying customers and building genuine, valuable relationships, and consistently meeting and exceeding their SLAs.

Shifting Omnichannel Support from Concept to Reality

Implementing an omnichannel support strategy is a significant investment for any company. From a people perspective, it requires organizational and cultural shifts in how your company and its employees view the goals of customer service.

First and foremost, customer service must switch from a ticket-centric to a customer-centric model. This enables your customer service team to focus on goals, such as reducing customer effort, driving more first contact resolutions, and building long-lasting customer relationships... rather than resolving tickets as fast as possible.

An omnichannel support strategy will create more effortless experiences on both sides, that yield better outcomes for both customers and agents. It will ensure customers are provided meaningful support that places them in the driver's seat, and agents are always given the proper context to progress every interaction forward.

From a technology perspective, an omnichannel strategy requires that you have a support solution that can integrate your combination of communication channels in order to capture the free flow of conversations and display the data in a single screen. A best-in-class solution should create a unified home for all your customer data, regardless of the source, not only the data generated from customer conversations.

An omnichannel strategy, backed by a true omnichannel solution, will quickly facilitate a customer experience that drives loyalty and keeps your business growing.

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