Working together

The Autonomous Customer 2013

Consumers’ attitudes towards channels, communications and customer relationships

March 2013

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Introduction

An introduction from BT and Avaya

Customers are vital to any organisation, and success depends on keeping them happy. To serve them well you need to understand how their expectations and behaviours are changing when it comes to customer service.

The Autonomous Customer 2013 samples 1,000 consumers in the UK and USA and looks at the key changes in consumer behaviour and channel choice that affect customer service. It highlights the huge pace of change in the way that consumers expect to engage and interact with organisations. It follows a similar study carried out in 2010.

What's quite astounding is the pace of change we've seen in the three years since we last carried out this research. Contact channels and devices have grown that were insignificant three years ago, like video and social media. The challenge for organisations is how to adapt to the needs of a fast changing consumer without 'breaking the bank' and be able to:

- Make better use of video in the contact centre.
- Incorporate social media into the contact centre.
- Make it simple to use devices to access organisations.
- Find ways of equipping agents with more information, more expertise or perhaps putting the call through to somewhere else in the organisation.
- Make it easy to do business.

The key findings show:

1. Twitter and Facebook are driving social media service
   – 55% have interacted with a company using social media
2. Organisations must support wider channel choice for consumers
   – 38% use web chat to communication with organisations – fastest growing channel
   – 68% would like web-chat offered whilst on the internet
3. Video adoption is increasing fast
   – Video usage at home has increased by 100% in last 3 years
   – 55% would be interested to have their questions answered by video-chat
4. The omni-channel failure – organisations struggle to link channels
   – Only 17% say organisations make it easy to switch between different channels
5. Customer demand is becoming more complicated… and the need for Networked experts is increasing
   – 3 in 4 regularly ask to speak to a manager when phoning an agent
   – 58% say they get better help from other consumers than call centre agents

The research, data and views in this white paper have been prepared in good faith but neither BT nor Avaya nor the authors of the report can be held responsible for any actions or otherwise taken by those reading it.

1

Introduction

The contact centre 'mission' used to be to process lots of calls, fast. But as this research highlights it's no longer that simple. The demands being placed on contact centre staff are increasingly complex and technical as consumers become better informed. The traditional contact centre model is breaking down and being integrated with new technologies.

BT and Avaya can help organisations create an "omni-channel" approach to customer service and empower organisations of all sizes to provide world-class care to their customers. We can give agents a much broader access to the information needed to manage customers' interactions regardless of channel used. And provide organisations with the ability to add new communication channels without significantly increasing complexity or cost.

BT manages 10 billion minutes per year of inbound voice calls to our enterprise customers' contact centres. We understand voice; we understand contact centres and we're enabling new online channels such as social media. This makes us the partner of choice to help organisations deliver an outstanding omni-channel customer experience.

2

Executive summary

The autonomous customer is a major trend in customer communications first identified by BT and Avaya in 2010.

With politicians, academics, the media and business leaders all underlining the rapid pace of change in modern life, BT and Avaya carried out an update to the research from 2010 in order to discover how consumer attitudes and behaviours are changing when it comes to customer contact. The answer is fast.

Autonomous customers

Our new research with 1,000 consumers in the UK and USA shows that the autonomous customer trend has accelerated since 2010: people are using digital technology to be independent, well-informed consumers. They are more influenced by other consumers than by brands, and are turning away from organisations as trusted sources of advice. The challenge for organisations is how they respond to this in their customer contact strategies.

Loyalty gives way to switching

50% of UK consumers say loyalty to companies is a thing of the past – up from 44% in 2010 – while 85% always shop around to get the best prices. Across the USA and the UK, online brands have transformed consumers' expectations of value and service. The internet has provided solutions to age-old problems such as out of stocks in retail (with 47% of consumers experiencing this often – no improvement on 2010). Consumers say online brands outperform traditional brands in two key areas:

- value for money (66%)
- speed of service (62%).

Fragvergence accelerates

As identified by BT and Avaya in 2008, the trend towards fragvergence has gathered momentum, with consumers using a wider range of media, channels and applications.

FRAGVERGENCE ACCELERATES

using two to three times a week or more

	2010		2013
PC/Laptop	87%	▼	85%
WiFi	42%	▲	60%
Mobile Broadband	26%	▲	29%
Android Smartphone	-	▲	33%
iPhone	18%	▲	25%
Blackberry	15%	▼	12%
Android tablet	-	▲	16%
iPad	6%	▲	23%
Facebook	56%	▲	67%
Twitter	12%	▲	27%

Channel shift – equalisation not substitution

As a result of fragvergence, autonomous customers have broadened their preferences for dealing with organisations. In the last 10 years, organisations have committed to channel shift strategies based on widespread use of low cost internet self-service, in place of phone calls, face to face and post. However, already the data shows consumers, overall, are using internet self-service direct to organisations less as new channels such as Apps, web-chat and social media become available.

2

Executive summary

The omni-channel future

Customers want to use more channels and organisations need to consider how they adopt omni-channel strategies. Providing access to the new range of channels is one thing; breaking through organisational ‘silos’ to link them together is proving to be quite another.

> 82%
> ***would like it if organisations always offered different channels to meet their needs***

But since 2010, consumers say there has been little improvement:

- Only 17% say organisations make it easy to switch between different channels.
- A further 94% say they want to be able to email the same agent they speak to.
- 91% want organisations to make their phone number clearer on all communications.

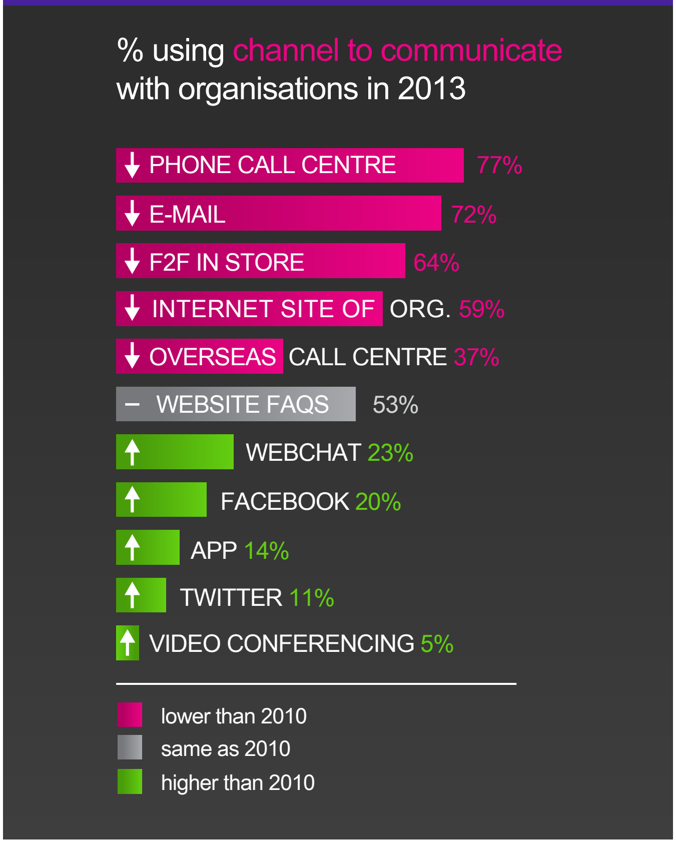
Social media service – 55% use it to interact with organisations

The growth in consumers interacting with social media has been phenomenal, rising to 55%. More than 1 in 3 use it to get special offers and vouchers, while 8% have used it to complain to a company and 12% have used it for customer service even if the query is often resolved by phone or e-mail later. Some 39% use smartphones to post comments on Facebook or Twitter about the customer service they’ve just received while shopping, up from less than 2% in 2010.

Smartphones go mainstream

Since 2010, take-up of smartphones in the UK and USA has gone from nearly 1 in 3 online consumers to nearly two-thirds. This is fundamentally changing the nature of how consumers interact with organisations, particularly among the 16-34 age group.

CONSUMERS CHANGING USE OF CHANNELS TO CONTACT ORGANISATIONS



There have been big increases in the number of consumers who use a smartphone to access the internet, social media and apps (based on using their smartphone two to three times a week or more):

- 28% use YouTube compared with 13% in 2010
- 32% use location-based apps compared with 14% in 2010
- 50% access the web compared with 34% in 2010
- 43% use social networking compared with 28% in 2010.

Consumers are actively using smartphones and social media while they shop, with 34% downloading vouchers while shopping in store, with the 16-34 age group the most active.

Video: 100% up, slowly but surely for customer contact

There has been a 100% increase in consumers using video conferencing at home at least 2 to 3 times a week since 2010, with a similar increase in those using it at work. Some 53% are using YouTube at home weekly, and 24% of US consumers now use it to search the internet in preference to search engines like Google. The public are looking for more opportunities to interact with organisations via video chat, particularly when it comes to healthcare and product demonstrations.

2

Executive summary

68% would like
web chat offered while they're on the internet

Complex online self-service – new for 2013

The 2013 research reveals that consumers want to be offered complex self-service whenever they use websites and apps. This may help to re-boot internet self-service if consumers are confident they will receive help if serving themselves is problematic. Online processes are not always failsafe, so 89% want their questions answered by a real person on the phone or via web chat while shopping online.

Phone still the number 1 channel

Consumers still use the phone as the channel they rely on most when they have queries, particularly when trying to resolve complex problems.

- 54% had phoned a call centre in the past month (compared to 56% in 2010).
- 49% say their calls are getting more complex.

Problems with call centres continue, showing little improvement on 2010:

- 1 in 2 say it takes too long to identify them.
- 69% complain they are often asked to repeat their account details on the same call.
- 58% say they found other consumers more helpful than agents.

Consumers think organisations should improve the support they give to agents so that they are more knowledgeable and proactive in resolving problems: 70% say they often know more about the problem than the agent does, and 71% say that if they don't get the right answer, they often call back to speak to another agent.

WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH INTERNET SELF-SERVICE WHICH HELP WOULD YOU PREFER?

	UK	US
Phone	64%	68%
Email	54%	49%
Call me button	28%	23%
Web chat	23%	32%
Video chat	19%	19%
Website FAQs	14%	16%
Online virtual agent	12%	14%

Bring it all together with big data

Organisations are increasingly adopting smart service strategies to actively track, monitor and notify customers of important events and developments.

65% like it when
organisations notice they have a problem

Further, 60% say the more information they give, the better customer service they expect. But brands need to be careful how they use this data, as consumers can be suspicious of their motives.

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Background and methodology

This report presents the findings from research commissioned by BT Global Services and Avaya and carried out by Davies Hickman Partners (www.davieshickman.com). We interviewed 1,036 online consumers in January 2013: over 500 in the UK and 500 in the USA. The aim was to understand how consumer attitudes to dealing with organisations are changing since the first Autonomous Customer research was completed in 2010. The first report identified the concept of omni-channel strategies which is now widely accepted, and questions for the updated research in 2013 included:

- How is the way consumers use channels to contact organisations changing?
- What impact is the smartphone having on the way people deal with businesses?
- How is social media changing both sales and customer service?

davies hickman
research & analysis
Marketing & Service Innovation

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BT Global Services and Avaya first identified the emerging autonomous customer in 2010, citing changes in consumer behaviour and access to more channels. Customers' rapidly changing behaviours challenged the customer relationships that organisations had worked hard to build through good service, CRM and loyalty schemes.

Autonomous customers in 2013

THE AUTONOMOUS CUSTOMER
Shopper Swots
Internet self-service is first point of contact
Social media-savvy
Turning away from brands and institutions
Youbiquitous smartphones

Over the past three years, the need for organisations to respond to autonomous customers has become even stronger, as their attitudes and behaviours have developed further:

Shopper swots

- 85% of consumers say they shop around to get the best prices, compared to 82% in 2010.
- 52% have downloaded vouchers on their smartphones to get the best prices, compared to 5% in 2010.

Self-service has become the first point of contact

- 58% of online consumers agree that self-service is good because it puts them in control.
- 62% prefer to buy online as no one tries to sell you anything.

Social media-savvy

- 55% have used social media to interact with a brand or an organisation.
- 80% use online reviews to check product quality.
- 39% contribute to online reviews on websites like TripAdvisor.

Turning away from brands and institutions

- Only 23% of consumers trust that the content on an organisation's website is unbiased and reliable.
- 67% say much of the personalised offers/vouchers they receive are irrelevant to their needs.

Youbiquitious smartphones

- The number of online consumers with a smartphone has nearly doubled, from just over 30% to 58% (up to 64% in the UK).
- Those aged 16-34 are using smartphones on the move to interact with brands: 48% have posted comments about an organisation's customer service just after they've bought or received something.

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The autonomous customer in 2013

Fragvergence continues to grow

In 2008, BT and Avaya spotlighted the trend towards consumers using many channels and media rather than a single device for their communication, information and entertainment. Fast forward to 2013, and consumers are using fixed phones, smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, games consoles and TVs to access the internet. What's more, the range of uses has grown with the emergence of social media.

FRAGVERGENCE ACCELERATES

using two to three times a week or more

	2010		2013
PC/Laptop	87%	▼	85%
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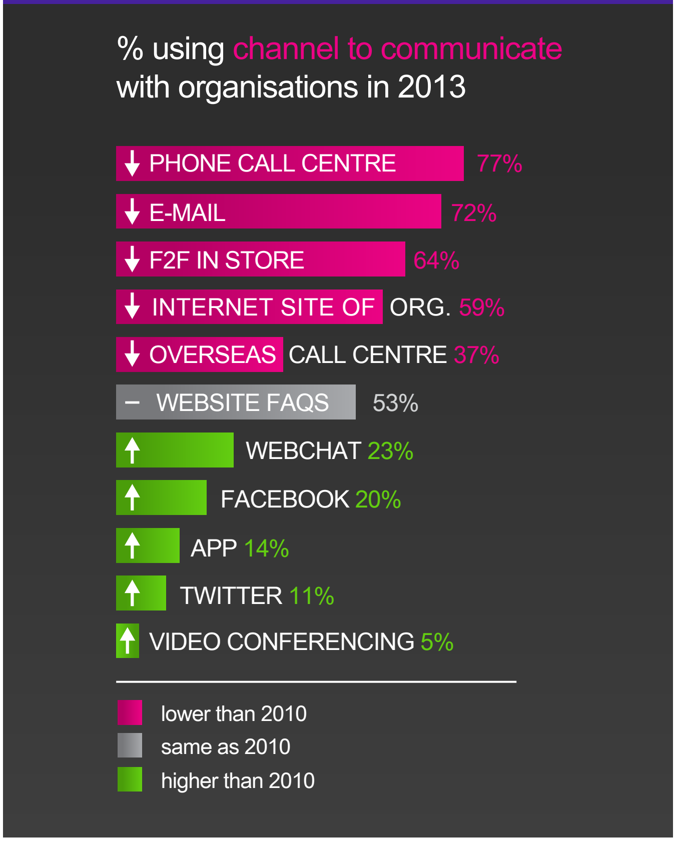
CONSUMERS CHANGING USE OF CHANNELS TO CONTACT ORGANISATIONS



Channel shift – equalisation not substitution

Autonomous customers have changed their preferences for dealing with organisations. While the phone remains the number 1 channel for resolving more complex issues, new channels are growing fast. But customers are using them alongside rather than instead of some of the old channels.

In the last 10 years, organisations have committed to channel shift strategies based on widespread use of low cost internet self-service, in place of phone calls, face to face visits and post. However, already the data shows consumers, overall, are using internet self-service less as new channels such as Apps, web-chat and social media become available.

Single channel dominance seems some way off: 48% of 16-24 year olds say they prefer going to the shops rather than online shopping, compared to the average of 42%.

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The omni-channel failure

68%

expect the information they give an organisation in one place (eg, through its website) to be available in another

Consumers say that organisations have failed to deliver omni-channel strategies after many years of trying. This means it is still difficult for consumers to:

- use the full range of channels to communicate with organisations
- switch from one channel to another, particularly during a single interaction
- find their details available from one channel to another.

only 17% say
organisations make it easy to switch between different channels

Channel preference is weaker

Consumers' preferences for using a particular channel has weakened, and they seem to choose channels based on their context and reason for making contact. The 2013 research revealed which channels customers prefer for:

However, consumers do want the ability to use channels simultaneously and switch between these depending on occasion and need.

91%
Organisations should make phone numbers clearer on all channels

94%
Want to e-mail same agent spoke to

97%
Want it to be possible to order in-store any products which are out of stock for home delivery

74%
Want to choose where to return products to/from

CHANNEL CHOICE BY CONTACT PURPOSE

Researching Products	Querying bills and accounts	Getting help and advice	Complaints
Internet self-service 25%	Phone 18%	Internet self service 18%	E-mail 24%
Face to face 22%	E-mail 17%	Phone 15%	Phone 17%
E-mail 13%	Internet self-service 16%	Face to Face 16%	Face to face 13%
Phone 8%	Face to face 15%	E-Mail 16%	
Facebook 8%			

5

The omni-channel failure

Low effort, ease of business

Organisations are finding it more difficult to 'lock-in' consumers to long-term relationships, and their ability to switch is being driven by technology. Many are trying to reduce customer effort and improve ease of doing business to attract and retain consumers who are time-poor and value convenient interactions.

> 82% of respondents agreed
> ***that they buy more from companies who make it easier to do business with them***

Omni-channel standards for customer ease

While call centre KPIs are well established, organisations struggle to know the equivalent for new channels such as web chat. Yet consumers are fairly clear about what they expect.

SMARTPHONES	
48%	Texts are replied to within one hour
38%	No more than 3 'push notifications' from an App each month
32%	Can contact an organisation directly through an App
CALL CENTRES	
84%	Phone number is free
80%	Told how long they will need to wait in call queue
78%	Call answered in 20 seconds
55%	Call centre agent knows what internet page I'm on
INTERNET	
59%	Web chat support is near instant
37%	One-way video chat is available to contact organisations
72%	E-mails are replied to within 3 hours
SOCIAL MEDIA	
34%	Receive a response from an organisation within 15 minutes through social media sites (ie, Facebook/Twitter)
SHOPS	
63%	No more than 3 people in a shop queue to buy something

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Going Social

22%	19%	14%
See the number of 'likes' on a company's page as a mark of its success	Find it easy to contact companies through Facebook pages	Agree that the ads on Facebook are tailored to my interests

The number of people using Facebook two to three times a week or more is up from 56% in 2010 to 67% now. For Twitter, it is up from 12% to 27%.

Social media service shifting towards Facebook and Twitter

One of the biggest differences from 2010 is consumer take-up of Facebook and Twitter to interact with organisations. This throws up the question, should organisations set up social media centres to handle this interaction?

> Overall, 20% of online consumers say
> ***their experience of using Twitter and Facebook for customer service has been very helpful***

CONSUMERS ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS

55%	have used Facebook or Twitter to interact with an organisation
33%	to get special offers or vouchers
8%	to complain about the company
12%	to get customer service
27%	to follow a company because they love the brand
27%	to follow a company to learn about its products and services

Facebook stronger for commerce

Consumers are using Facebook more widely for a range of connections with brands and organisations, going beyond simple 'likes'. But only 1 in 5 say it's easy to contact an organisation directly through Facebook.

Consumers agreeing the following sectors use social media for sales and marketing very or quite well:

- Retailers – 46%
- Consumer goods – 42%
- Travel companies – 37%
- Banks and financial services providers - 26%
- Healthcare/ Hospitals / NHS – 23%
- Local/Central government – 20%
- Pharma – 20%

CONSUMERS USING FACEBOOK TO INTERACT WITH ORGANISATIONS

- 8% regularly buy products through Facebook, 24% go from Facebook to websites to make a purchase
- 21% use Facebook as a reference to read other customers' product reviews
- 20% of people expect to receive more offers and deals
- 13% would like to be able to get customer service through web chat on a companies' Facebook page
- Only 35% agree that organisations should always show negative views on their Facebook page

7

Smartphones go mainstream

Since 2010, take-up of smartphones in the UK and USA has gone from nearly 1 in 3 online consumers to nearly two-thirds. This is fundamentally changing the nature of how consumers interact with organisations, particularly among the 16-34 age group.

Smartphones go mainstream

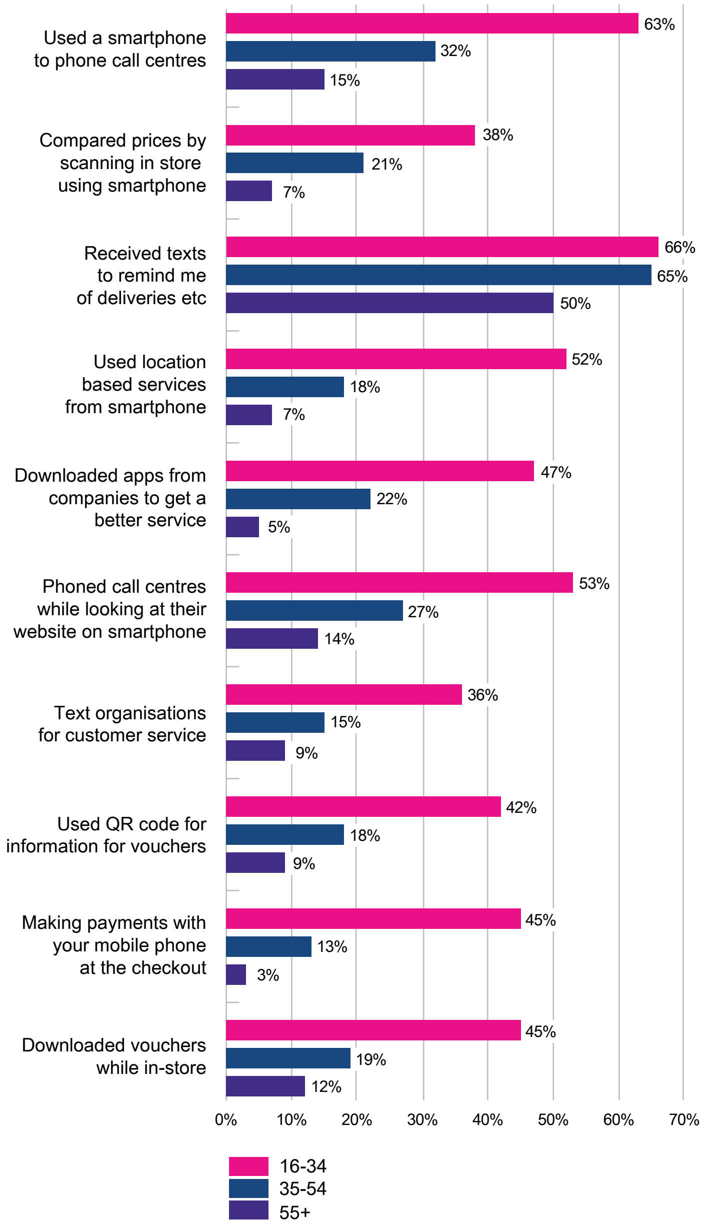
There have been big increases in the number of consumers who use a smartphone to access the internet, social media and apps (based on using two to three times a week or more):

- 28% use YouTube on their mobile compared with 13% in 2010
- 32% use location-based apps compared with 14% in 2010
- 50% access the web via their mobile compared with 34% in 2010
- 43% use social networking compared with 28% in 2010.

16–34 year olds are driving smartphone commerce

Consumers are actively using smartphones and social media while they shop, with 34% downloading vouchers while shopping in store. But the differences are most pronounced for the 16-34 age group, who are active users of smartphones on the move.

WHICH IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU DONE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



8

Video: slowly but surely

13% in 2013

are using video conferencing at home weekly compared to

6% in 2010

The growth of video communication has been predicted for a long time, but the 2013 Autonomous Customer research reveals a 100% increase in the use of video conferencing at home in the past three years.

Use of video conferencing at work is also up by a similar amount with 29% using it in the last six months. 19% of consumers say they want to be able to use video chat when they experience problems during online self-service.

Video culture is growing too

While people are using video conferencing and video chat much more frequently, there is a significant shift towards getting entertainment and information via video. 24% of US consumers say they now search YouTube instead of Google. 53% are using YouTube at home weekly compared with 41% in 2010. And 34% of US consumers prefer video reviews to written ones, linked to the huge growth of the US image-based website, Pinterest.com.

Top uses for VIDEO CHAT

ONE	Healthcare, hospitals and NHS
TWO	Retailers
THREE	Banks and financial services
FOUR	Government
FIVE	Travel and holiday companies
SIX	FMCG

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU USE VIDEO CONTENT FOR?

	UK	US
To see a product being used	46%	57%
To get instructions	43%	52%
To get more information	38%	45%
To view adverts	33%	32%
To see other customer reviews	24%	30%
To resolve a problem	28%	25%
YouTube instead of Google to search new products	17%	24%
Use Pinit weekly	9%	20%

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Complex self-service

68% would like web chat offered while they're on the internet

89% want their questions answered by a real person on the phone or via web chat while shopping online

The top channel strategy objective during the past 10 years for traditional organisations has been the shift to internet self-service online, letting customers do the work. But many organisations have failed to recognise that consumers often have trouble online and need help. Some 57% of consumers say that some online application processes are so complicated they should not be put online.

Online self-service is growing

Our data show that the majority of consumers use online self-service first for research, buying, etc. Some 45% prefer to deal with organisations over the internet rather than by phone and 43% prefer using email/websites when dealing with complex questions.

Driving complex self-service

In providing complex self-service, the challenge is to understand which channels will most effectively support the online process. Consumers prefer the phone, but also value a range of other media.

WHEN YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH INTERNET SELF-SERVICE WHICH HELP WOULD YOU PREFER?

	UK	US
Phone	64%	68%
Email	54%	49%
Call me button	28%	23%
Web chat	23%	32%
Video chat	19%	19%
Website FAQs	14%	16%
Online virtual agent	12%	14%

10

Phone is still number 1 channel

Overall, the phone remains the top channel of choice for consumers who want to contact organisations directly and get help (77%).

Call centres are finally addressing longstanding problems

54% have used the phone to contact a call centre in the past three months compared to 56% in 2010, with queries shifting towards more complex issues. 59% say they would rather use the phone than website FAQs – little change on 2010.

Even so, consumers still want organisations to deal with longstanding problems:

- 54% say the music and messages played while on hold often don't provide a good impression of the organisation (up from 42% in 2010).
- 1 in 2 say it takes too long for the organisation to identify them.
- Nearly 1 in 2 want voice biometrics in order to speed up the call.
- 2 in 3 worry about security over the phone.
- 93% say organisations should call them back when they say they will.
- 83% say they call when the lines are less busy.

54%

Phoned call centre last month (56% 2010)

69%

Say they are often asked to repeat their account details on the same call

49%

Calls are more complex

3:4

Ask to speak to a senior manager

59%

Prefer phone to web FAQs (58% 2010)

3:4

I ask for the agents name to report them

10

Phone is still number 1 channel

Agents need to be networked experts

At the same time, consumers are still frustrated by gaps in the skills and knowledge of some call centre agents – an ongoing issue from 2010. As consumers do more simple interactions online, and leave the complicated issues to deal with by phone, they will expect greater expertise and emotional empathy from agents.

58%
Have got better help from other consumers than agents

2:3
Have a better call if agent has same interests as me

79%
Agents have struggled to answer my queries

85%
Put me on hold as they don't know what to say

70%
Often I know more about the problem than the agent

2:3
Agents haven't known what's on their website

Voice self-service has a strong role

At the other extreme, simple queries and contacts have been successfully handled by voice self-service over the phone for many years. More brands are now using voice self-service since 2010, with 79% of consumers saying they would prefer calls to be taken by voice self-service rather than handled offshore. A further 40% have used voice self-service regularly (more so in the USA), and 29% of US consumers prefer voice self-service as it is quicker than speaking to a person.

% WHO WOULD CONSIDER USING VOICE SELF-SERVICE FOR…	
39%	Store opening hours
33%	Check account balance
33%	Locating stores
32%	Check timetables
31%	Activate credit card
29%	Directory assistant

11

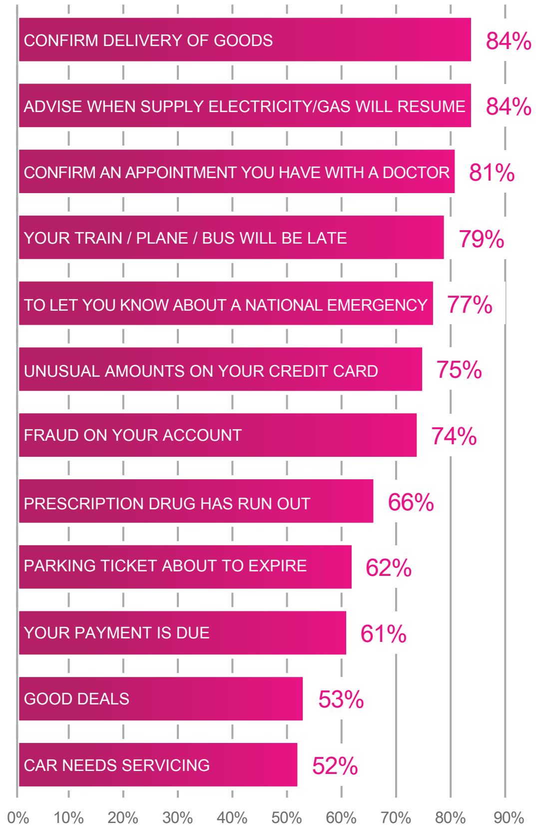
Smart service needs big data

60%

the more information they give, the better customer service they expect

There is a powerful new trend developing in customer experience management, with organisations actively tracking and monitoring products, services and customer services to identify problems or issues – 'smart service'. This means organisations can be proactive and contact customers to notify them about problems or issues and take corrective action. The most common example is text updates aligned to delivery times, which consumers generally welcome.

CONSUMERS WOULD LIKE MESSAGES FROM ORGANISATIONS BY PHONE/E-MAIL/TEXT/PUSH NOTIFICATION



Just over 4 out of 5 customers
would like the offers companies make them to be more relevant

The big data dilemma

Smart service depends on organisations collecting and analysing data to 'remember things for customers'. In fact 65% like it when companies notice they have a problem. But many consumers are uncomfortable about some of the privacy issues involved in big data:

67%

are concerned that genuine calls from banks and organisations may be fraudsters

3:4

are suspicious about the data companies collect after visiting their website

Starting with the customer and working backwards

The end point of the drive to re-engage with the autonomous customer is the use of CRM and big data. The challenge for organisations is to do this in a way which is acceptable to consumers, by tying together the increasingly fragmenting channels used by consumers and making relevant offers to them.

The organisations that are successful in the future will be those that seize this opportunity while making it easier for consumers to do business with them.

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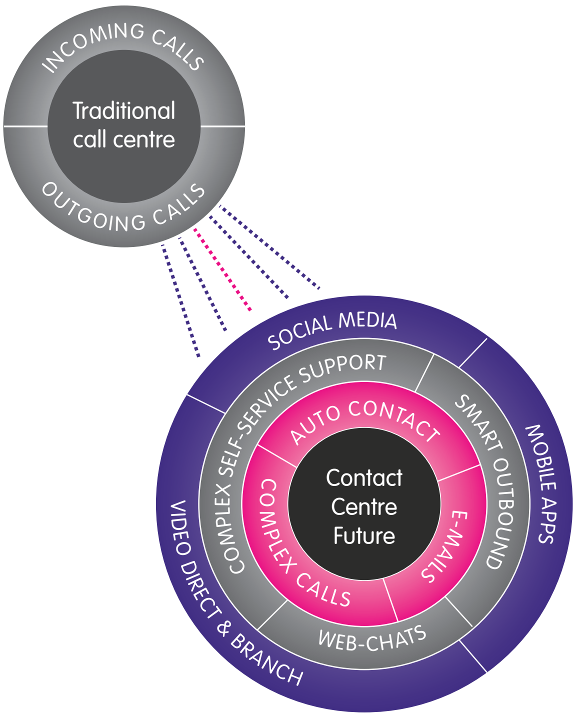
Summary – Reconnecting with autonomous customers

The research shows significant shifts in consumer behaviour over the 3 years to 2013. The central challenge set by autonomous customers is to make services available everywhere.

The contact centre, whether local or central, will become the core for these new and traditional channels. Its role as the 'eyes and ears' of the organisation will remain crucial in understanding customers' experiences and launching smart service to drive up loyalty.

THE FUTURE CONTACT CENTRE



Reconnecting with autonomous, omni-channel customers

As consumers turn away from organisations, relying instead on other sources of information and advice, how can you reconnect with your customers and drive relationships and loyalty?

The Autonomous Customer 2013 research suggests organisations should consider these strategic steps:

1. Make it easier for consumers to interact by phone, website and app.
2. Use voice self-service where possible to reduce costs.
3. Drive internet self-service and apps, but keep pace with consumers' demand for complex self-service using web chat and other tools.
4. Overcome consumers' concerns and frustrations about security by adopting voice biometrics.
5. Harness social media such as Twitter and Facebook while taking care not to create new call centre infrastructures.
6. Use the phone and agents as networked experts to build relationships, loyalty and, ultimately, sales opportunities.
7. Explore the use of video conferencing and chat, where consumers will value the interaction.
8. Work harder to understand customers by using big data which will help anticipate future demand.

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BT & Avaya's perspective

The autonomous customer is a major trend in CRM first identified by BT and Avaya in 2010.

Increasingly customers want the freedom to contact the organisations that serve them when and how they choose, with more channels open to them — from voice and email, to text, live chat, social media, mobile apps and even video.

But these can't be standalone contact options. It's vital that they all work seamlessly together, so consumers get a consistent level of service, however they choose to get in touch. All of which means organisations need to consider how they adopt omni-channel strategies.

While the phone remains the number one channel for resolving more complex issues, new channels are growing fast. But customers are using them alongside (rather than instead of) the old channels.

To serve them well organisations need to understand how their expectations and behaviours are changing. As it stands, many are finding it difficult to hold on to customers, as the ability of consumers to switch providers has boomed with the growth of new technology.

In response, organisations are trying to make it easier for customers to deal with them on their own terms, in the hope that they can attract and retain consumers who are time-poor, and value convenient interactions.

One way of achieving that is by offering customers effective self-service options when they want them. And over the last 10 years, organisations have committed to channel shift strategies based on widespread use of low cost internet self-services, in place of phone calls, face-to-face visits and post.

Consumers' preferences for using a certain channel for a particular purpose have become diluted, and they seem to choose the channel according to their reason for making contact.

However, consumers do want to use channels simultaneously and switch between these depending on occasion and need.

The challenge for organisations is how to adapt to the needs of a fast changing consumer without breaking the bank. To do that they need to be able to:

- Make better use of video in their contact centres.
- Incorporate social media into their contact centres.
- Make it simple to use devices to access organisations.
- Find ways of equipping agents with more information, more expertise or adding intelligent call routing to their contact centres.

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BT & Avaya's perspective

How we can help

BT and Avaya can help organisations of all sizes create multichannel contact centres that let them offer world-class care to their customers without adding significant cost or complexity to their operation.

Integrating voice, web, email, text, social media, live chat and video, we can help you communicate more efficiently with your customers, and give your agents much broader access to the information they need to manage customer interactions effectively.

We understand your business; we understand contact centres and the new channels your customers expect to be able to use.

BT's approach to providing excellence in our customer management solutions lies in our partnerships. Our relationship with Avaya is longstanding, spanning over 20 years and thousands of successful joint projects.

We understand one size doesn't fit all — no two organisations are the same and no one solution works for everyone. That's why the depth of our partnership is vital, with access to all of Avaya's solutions giving you real choice.

The vital point at which we bring everything together (our portfolio, our partnership with Avaya and our expertise) with your organisation is through our professional services teams.

With more than 20 years in consultancy and a global team of professional service experts and consultants, we can bridge the gap between your strategic needs and your existing operations.

This makes us the partner of choice to help organisations deliver an outstanding omni-channel customer experience.

To find out more contact your BT Account manager or visit bt.com/btcontact

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Working together

Offices worldwide