

# How Technology Is Changing CUSTOMER SERVICE



# Intro

Customer service today looks vastly different than it did even ten years ago.

In the past, mediocre customer service was almost the expected standard, with long wait-times on phone calls or help emails that wouldn't be returned for days. And sometimes, even if the customer service wasn't great, you'd still stay on as a customer.

Now, though, technology has changed customer service for the better in many different ways. As a result, it's morphed customers' expectations, with over 54% of customers across the globe saying that their customer service expectations have risen even over the past few years.

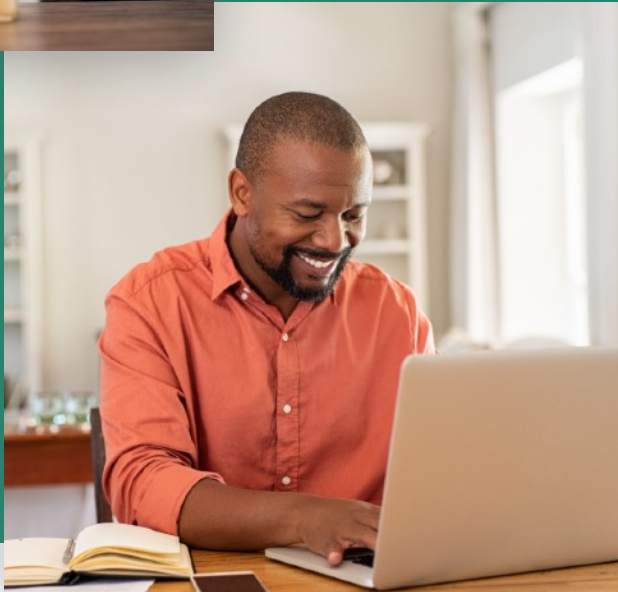


# BUSINESSES ARE Adapting

And the efforts aren't going unnoticed - 40% of American consumers acknowledge that more businesses are turning their focus to customer service. We're seeing more immediate and omnichannel support for higher-quality service than ever before, and this isn't just a unique perk of great service; it's an expectation.

And while customer expectations are paramount, the underlying cause *and* solution is one and the same:

## Technology







# HOW HAS Technology Changed?



Technology has undeniably changed customer service in multiple ways. There are four changes, however, that most significantly impacted customer service:

1. Integrated CRMs leading to more personalized service
2. Live chat functionality offering instantaneous response times
3. Accurate reporting gave insight into needed areas of improvement
4. Mobile features allowed for remote access & improved service



## #1 INCREASED ACCESS TO Customer Information

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software automatically tracks and stores customer information at every point of the buyer's journey. It's not only meant for tracking leads for sales purposes; it's also incredibly valuable when used to offer personalized service to existing leads and customers.

**59%** of customers have an increased demand for personalized service.

CRM software can be used by customer service team members to learn more about a customer's history. Even answering services like PATLive are able to plug into your CRM with your permission to help with basic customer concerns as needed.

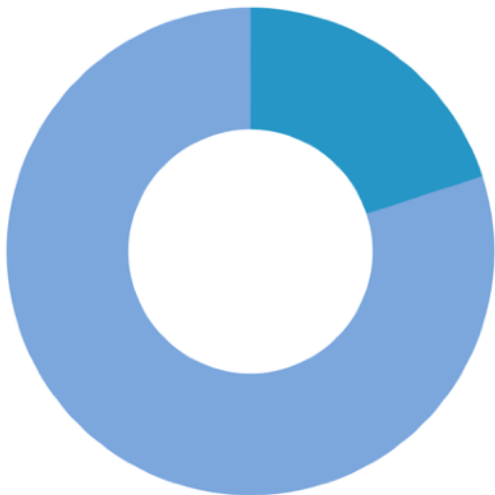
When a customer calls or sends a private message, the representative can pull up their entire history just by getting their name or account number. You can see the recent order they placed, past complaints they've made about a single issue, and what solutions have been offered so far.

This prevents long wait times for customers and the need for them to retell a single story multiple times across several phone calls or emails. You can offer more personalized, perfect-for-them solutions when you get a big picture view, which is the best way to deliver above-and-beyond customer service.





The number of companies investing in the omnichannel experience has jumped from **20% to more than 80%.**



Integrated CRM tools are also key to truly providing omnichannel, seamless customer service across multiple accounts. Someone can send you a live chat message to follow up with a phone call they placed several days earlier, and you're able to essentially pick up where you left off. That convenience for customers is a clear benefit, especially when many anticipate being frustrated by customer service in general.

## #2 LIVE CHAT FUNCTIONALITY OFFERS **Lightning-Fast Responses**

Live chat functionality was once groundbreaking technology and too expensive for small businesses. This is no longer the case, as it can be almost instantly available to most businesses in the few clicks it takes to install and set up a plugin or widget.

Businesses can also take advantage of social media management tools that sync up all their private messages across all social channels so that they see them all in one dashboard. This leads to faster response times, and it significantly decreases the likelihood of customer messages getting missed.



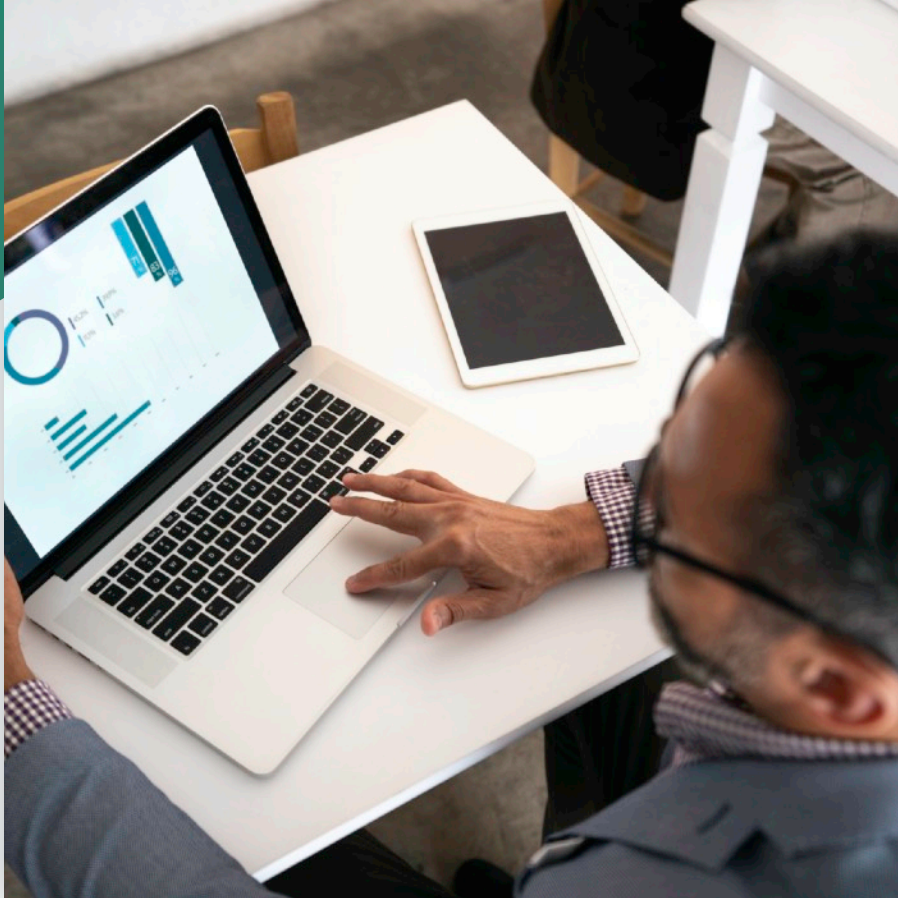




It takes approximately **40 seconds**  
to solve an issue using live chat.

Some brands are even going above and beyond by offering dedicated services through live chat, including technical support or product troubleshooting. Pet product company Chewy even has “live chat with a vet” during standard operating hours for existing customers for all urgent questions they may have.

Many businesses are using a combination of chatbots and conversations with actual representatives through live chat. In the best examples, chatbots may be used to answer basic customer questions about store hours, pricing, or policies while more complex needs are sent straight to a customer service representative.



## #3 BUSINESSES HAVE ACCESS TO Real-Time Reporting

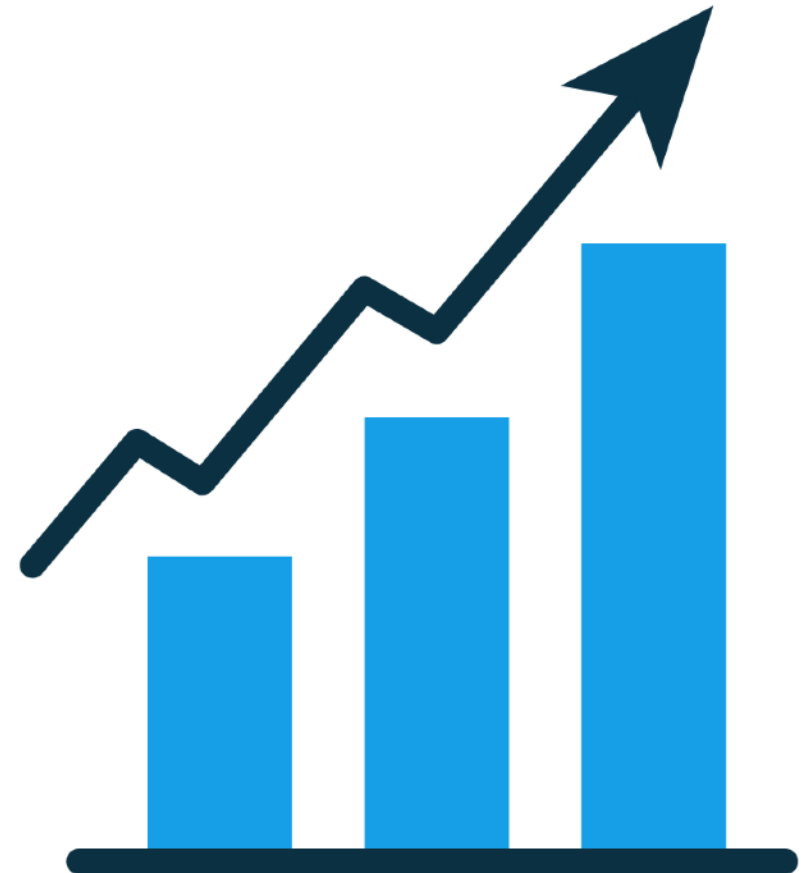
As technology has advanced, it's not only granted us new functionality, but it's also given us access to new information, too. There's plenty of data that businesses can now use to assess the performance of their customer service team and how it's living up to customer expectations.

**40%** of all data analytics projects will relate to an aspect of customer experience

You can use automated emails to reach out to customers following a customer service experience to see if they were happy with the solutions offered, for example. You can also set up surveys that customers can answer on the phone immediately after receiving help from a representative.

Answering services like PATLive also offer native, real-time analytics so that you can see how many calls you're receiving, how long the calls are lasting, and even the result of the calls.

By understanding how your team is performing and what calls are happening, you can troubleshoot potential issues to improve the customer experience.



## #4 INCREASED MOBILE FEATURES To Remote Access

Mobile features means more widespread and remote access for your team, allowing them to offer outstanding customer service from anywhere.

For businesses who are working with remote team members, this is a massive advantage. Plenty of businesses were shifting to allow team members to work remotely before 2020, but this has become an increasingly important feature during COVID. It will continue to be essential as the face of the workforce continues to change moving forward.





With mobile features, customer service quality can increase dramatically. You can, for example, have a team leader who monitors customer service data remotely from a mobile app, or even can be called in a customer service emergency when they're out of office thanks to virtual business lines that work through mobile apps.

You can also use mobile apps to access information about your call answering service. PATLive's mobile app allows you to access your voicemail from any location along with changing your availability status to determine whether or not calls go through to the answering service.

If you had to leave the office early one day and only have an answering service take calls outside of your standard office hour and forgot to account for this in-office, you can automatically patch calls through early from the mobile app. No customer call goes unanswered, creating a better experience for everyone.





# TECHNOLOGY IS IMPACTING Customers' Expectations

As technology offers new developments for businesses and customers alike, customer expectations have skyrocketed when it comes to customer service. Customers are now looking to their service experiences to determine if they want to purchase from a brand, and are willing to pay more for brands that have a customer-first focus.

- Personalization in service
- Immediacy in availability
- Access across multiple platforms
- Human-to-human service






## CUSTOMERS EXPECT MORE Personalized Service

As some businesses invest in the ability to offer personalized service, it becomes the baseline expectation.

**72%** of customers expect that customer service agents to know their history with the brand, including who they are, and what they've purchased.

A large blue triangle pointing right and a dark blue triangle pointing left, both overlapping the white background.

Personalized service is all about understanding and approaching each customer as an individual, and each situation as unique. While you will have company policies that dictate what you can and can't do in customer service situations, the ability to think outside the mold when possible can turn a negative customer experience into an outstanding one.

This is where the CRM software comes into play. Have a strong CRM system, and train your customer service teams to use it to not only access information but to log data like a customer's complaint, their main pain points, and what's being done to resolve the concern.



# CUSTOMERS EXPECT Immediacy

Your customers want service now, there's no getting around it.

Since 90% of customers believe that an “immediate” response is important and 60% say that a response within 10 minutes or less is expected, your business needs to find new ways to answer calls, messages, and emails quicker.

Phone calls and real-time messaging are more popular options than email because of this expectation of immediacy.



## **12%** of U.S. consumers cited “lack of speed” as their biggest frustration with customer service.

If your wait times are more than ten minutes across almost any platform (but especially on phone), you likely need to look at solutions that can help you speed up the process. This could mean any combination of the following:

- Using better software to help process transactions faster
- Hiring more staff
- Offering your staff more training
- Having strong call-routing features set up to get the right customer to the right person as quickly as possible
- Working with a third-party answering service like PATLive to either handle call overflow or be the first line of defense






# CUSTOMERS WANT YOU TO HAVE Multiple Platforms

Customers want an omnichannel experience, and expect to have a seamless experience across platforms.

While this definitely adds more to your plate, you can't afford not to invest in customer service solutions so that you can connect with your customers where they want to be.

- 48% of consumers prefer phone
- 36% choose live chat
- 10% like to email
- 6% opt for contact forms



Mobile-responsive portals are essential, too, with so much traffic happening on mobile. 79% of millennials are even more inclined to buy from brands that offer mobile-responsive customer support portals.

Use that CRM software to offer a seamless experience across multiple platforms, and make sure that you're using tools to alert you when you have incoming messages on every platform. Tools that allow you to assign certain messages to individual team members can be particularly useful here. Two great examples are Hubspot and Salesforce.



# CUSTOMERS DO NOT WANT BOTS TO Replace Customer Service

AI-driven customer service solutions can be a great solution to improve and enhance your customer service, including response times. That being said, they should only be used as a supplemental solution and not a substitute for human customer service all together.

Bots, after all, can answer quick questions about store hours or policies, and may even be able to recommend different products. They can't help with complex personalized customer service concerns, however, especially once the customer is frustrated.



Only **1 in 3** customers think that chatbots are effective.

Consumers find it extremely frustrating when they can't reach a live human. You can use navigational menus on calls to get users to the right person quickly, though answering services are also a great solution for this.

Minimize your use of chatbots, only implementing them to answer basic questions and always having a “speak to representative” option immediately available.





# HOW TECHNOLOGY WILL CHANGE Customer Service in the Future



While we don't know exactly what the future will hold, we are certain that developments in technology will continue to change the face of customer service moving forward.

Here are some of the ways we believe technology will impact customer service and consumer expectations in the near future:



## AI-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS CAN Aid in Personalization

As artificial intelligence develops, it can be used to offer additional support to the customer service team as they're making decisions and finding solutions for consumers.

## FACE TO FACE VIDEOS Will Increase

Face-to-face video communication is already being used by some companies for tech support, and this is a trend that will likely extend into other areas of customer service, too.



## SELF-SERVICE PORTALS Will Improve

Advanced, thorough self-service portals can help customers resolve quick issues on their own without ever needing to pick up the phone. We expect that these will continue to grow, benefiting customers and businesses with saved time.

## DEMAND FOR HUMAN SUPPORT Will Continue

Even with all the best technology in the world, customer service still relies heavily on a human connection and personalized, human-driven solutions. Never neglect this crucial part of the customer experience.



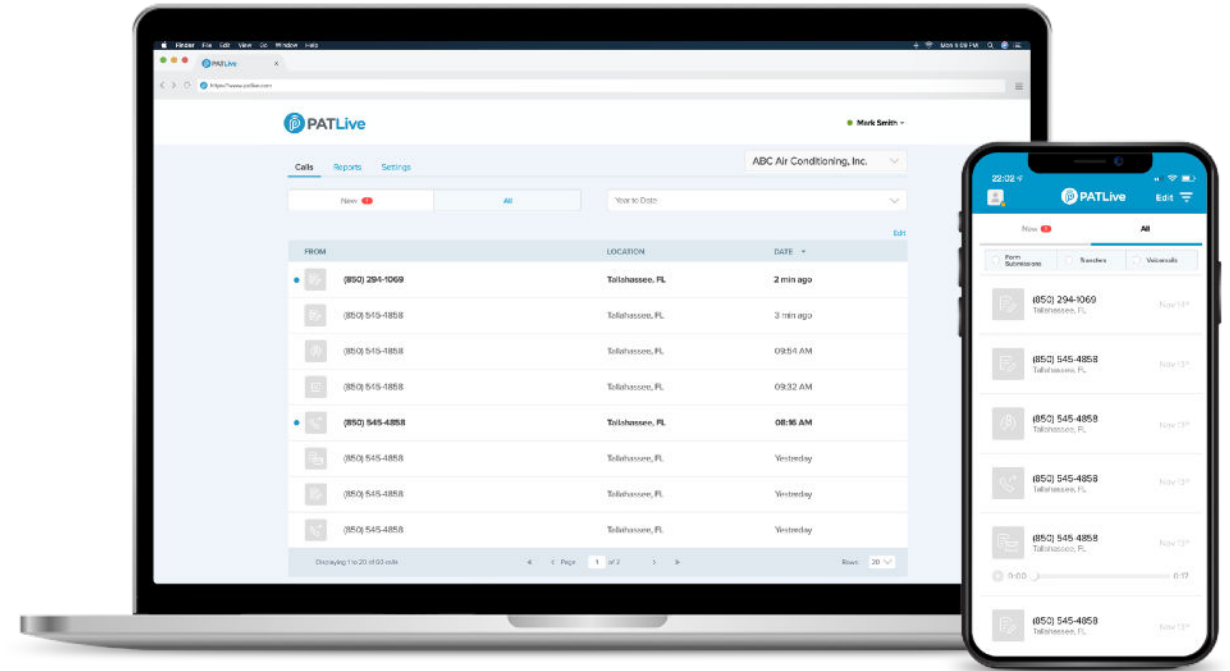
# CONCLUSION

New technology and increasing customer expectations can feel overwhelming, especially as they become even more important. Both need to be carefully considered, however, as you invest in customer service, because it's become a crucial differentiator between brands.

Utilizing the tools and technology at your disposal will help you deliver incredible customer experiences to outshine your competitors and grow your business to new heights.

In order to help your business provide the best service possible, we're excited to roll out our Mobile App, API, and updated Web App which allow our customers to gain insights into their customers and business, make changes on the go, and work from anywhere.

Giving you full control at all touch points, our integrated technology solutions provide you and your customers with truly exceptional service.



# MAKE EVERY CALL COUNT

*With PATLive's friendly & professional virtual receptionists.*

**100%**

U.S. based live receptionists,  
all located in sunny Florida.

**2M+**

calls answered every year, on  
average within 4 rings or less.

**29 yrs**

trusted experience partnering  
with thousands of businesses.



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Email [sales@patlive.com](mailto:sales@patlive.com) or call us for a live demo at (800) 775-7790.  
We're here 24/7/365.

# RESOURCES

Microsoft, **State of Global Customer Service**, [Learn More](#)

Businesswire, **Customer Service**, [Learn More](#)

PWC, **Retail in 2020 - Winning in a Polarized World**, [Learn More](#)

Website Builder, **101 Live Chat Statistics**, [Learn More](#)

Gartner, **Customer Service Operations**, [Learn More](#)

Microsoft, **Global State of Customer Service**, [Learn More](#)