

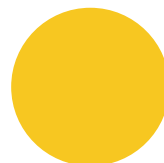
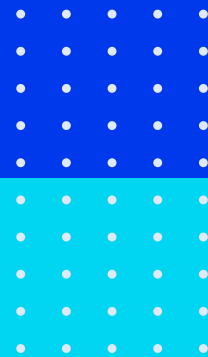
Ebook



Rethinking Customer Service Communications

10 ways your customer service
communications can create better
experiences and drive loyalty

At Contacto, our mission is to enable omnichannel customer communications with a human touch — especially in a time when human connection is so important. We've come up with this list of 10 communications priorities to help you meet new and changing customer expectations, so you can provide a better customer experience and enhance loyalty.





Keep in touch

Keep the lines of communication open, so your agents are easy for your customers to reach when they need answers.

Today, those lines of communication go far outside the telephone line. SMS messaging, on-site and in-app chat, and social media are all growing channels for consumer-facing customer service.

One particularly advantageous use for messaging is to enable proactive customer communication. In the face of recent upheaval and continued uncertainty, proactive notifications help keep customers engaged, satisfied, and loyal. SMS notifications are a great way to keep in touch.



Omnichannel is best

Omnichannel customer communications help you stay connected with your customers at all times.

By omnichannel, we mean making sure your customers can communicate with you via messaging or voice through whatever channels are most convenient for them.

The essence of omnichannel is offering a cohesive customer experience at every touchpoint, and that includes facilitating easy communication with service agents and delivering fast, satisfying, personalized resolutions.

“Shoppers want the logistics of their lives to be as simple as possible. A strong omnichannel strategy is sensitive to changing consumer behavior and puts the technology and operations in place to meet customers where they are — and where they want you to be,” says Sharon Gee, vice president of revenue growth and GM of omnichannel at ecommerce platform BigCommerce.

Recent research from the platform in conjunction with Retail Dive found that 46% of retail executives planned to increase investment in omnichannel moving forward, compared with their investment plans prior to the pandemic.



Offer self-service

In research from customer service expert Shep Hyken, 67% of respondents said they use digital self-service tools, and 41% said they prefer them. While there's still a large percentage that prefers live agents, self-service can siphon off the low-touch enquiries to give agents more time to handle live interactions.

One such tool is interactive voice response (IVR), which can be set up as an auto-attendant that replaces an actual receptionist. IVR can route calls to agents during business hours or provide automated voice messages after business hours.

Integrating an IVR system with your CRM platform can be a good first step in providing a great customer experience, handling large call volumes, and reducing the costs associated with customer service.

Another self-service option: conversational chatbots. These virtual agents can resolve customer self-serve queries 24/7/365, reducing agent workload.

With access to a good self-service setup, customers can conveniently open service tickets, pay bills, schedule payments, book appointments, and track order shipments. Whenever a customer has an inquiry that can't be resolved with one of these automated options, they can be directed to a live agent for a more high-touch resolution.



Be nimble

What's convenient or most effective for one customer may be ineffective — or even inaccessible — for another.

Different age groups have different channel preferences, for instance. Based on your business's target demographic, this could help you determine which channels to devote the most resources toward.

The point is to reduce friction for as many customers as you can while optimizing internal processes so that agents can provide more personal service.

Retailers have to be able to respond quickly to requests and provide customers with the information they need in a timely fashion. Opening up new lines of customer communication, as well as offering robust self-service options, can all help keep consumers informed.



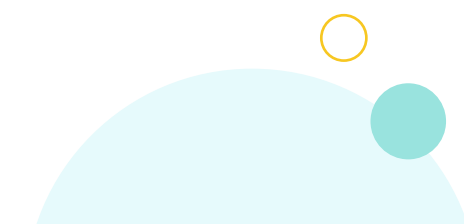
What is crucial to effective CX is choice. After all, different contexts are more appropriate than others for choosing automated self-service or otherwise, says [4 Roads founder Rob Nash](#).



Get the channel right

First, let's be clear — omnichannel doesn't mean every channel. Different consumer demographics, different business models, and different verticals all have unique needs — and brands have specific faces they want to show to the world. That should all impact your channel mix. Plus, get to know what customer interaction types work best on which channels, so you can guide consumers to convenient customer journeys with the lowest friction.

With Contacto, agents can switch channels seamlessly in the middle of a conversation, without rerouting the customer or creating a new ticket. For example, a customer may call in with an issue about an item that arrived damaged. As the agent works to resolve the issue, they may request a photo of the customer's delivery. The customer can easily provide one through the mobile app customer service chat. All of the activity, regardless of channel, is reflected in the active ticket that was created for this issue. The agent gets all the context they need regardless of which channel they are responding in, and the whole lifecycle of the interaction is captured.





Follow best practices

Almost everyone has had a customer service experience where you have to repeat your issue multiple times as you get moved around from one agent or department to another. This customer shuffle adds to the frustration of the initial issue.

Omnichannel isn't a whole new form of customer service. Classic best practices still apply here — even more so, perhaps, because an omnichannel contact center is so well suited to optimizing for metrics like first contact resolution, average response time, and customer satisfaction.

Contacto enables agents, managers, and administrators to look at past conversations, check out parameters like customer disposition and CSAT, reference past notes, and even listen again to calls — features that are great for agents who want to improve their performance and managers who want to offer feedback and coaching. Contacto also provides the higher level of visibility that managers and administrators need to monitor the health of the contact center and functionality of internal processes.

Seeing this information live in real time helps managers and administrators watch for metrics that indicate trouble, allowing them to adjust their approaches and ensure that employees adhere to best practices. For instance, if calls are timing out, managers can add more people to a queue to be better staffed.



Waiting on hold for hours to reach a customer service representative about returning an item, changing a flight, or requesting a refund is not only frustrating for customers, but it also hits on a particularly sensitive nerve right now: a widespread lack of human connection. Customers want to feel heard, and the use of outdated technology in automated call centers sends the opposite message, says [Accenture's Lan Guan](#).





Give your agents context

Contacto's unified agent desktop revolves around customer conversations, not tickets, and puts everything you need in one place for a human touch that doesn't require repetition.

With every conversation, agents have at-a-glance access to contextual information to fuel a more human experience and faster time to resolution. From the unified desktop, agents can view customer details, including CRM data and order history, transcripts from past customer support conversations, past customer service cases and resolutions, and agent notes and customer dispositions.

Contacto has post-call wrap-up time built into every call. Agents can use post-call wrap-up time to enter relevant information and create or update help desk tickets, making sure to continue the context for the next time — and the next agent.



Be dynamic

With Contacto, agents can see their conversations with customers transcribed in real time, helping them stay present and focused.

As the agent begins to interact with the customer, a conversation analytics panel picks up on triggers and performance indicators such as agent politeness and empathy, or using language of ownership. You can also set negative parameters, such as objection language.

Conversation analytics live-scores agent voice conversations on predefined parameters both for real-time agent adjustments and for coaching after the fact.

Agents not only learn as they go, but managers can make every agent their best agent by assessing performance through call scoring, transcripts, and recordings; providing feedback tailored to each rep and interaction; and giving real-time tips and guidance using call whispering to privately coach agents during their customer conversations.



Reliability Rules

Our advice to you? Make sure you can trust the underlying network. Contacto is powered by [Plivo's Premium Communications Network](#). The globally distributed PCN ensures virtually infinite scale while maintaining best-in-class quality for your business.

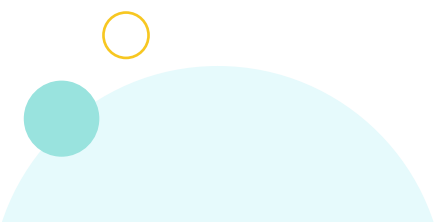
- Proven infrastructure with over a billion voice calls and messaging interactions each month across the globe.
- Enterprise-grade platform with high availability and extreme reliability— with a 99.99% uptime SLA.
- Thousands of businesses trust Plivo's data privacy, security, and compliance. (SOC II, Privacy Shield, CCPA, and GDPR).



Choose a vendor that's committed to your success

Contacto is designed to reduce operational support costs by streamlining your agents' work environment and cutting down on all the add-ons you need to deliver the support experience your customers expect. You can take advantage of drag-and-drop custom workflows that remove friction from the customer experience, out-of-the-box integrations that maximize your existing investments with seamless integrations with the business systems you already use, and reporting and analytics that turn real-time performance into data-driven insights to optimize the way you serve your customers.

Even with the most intuitive platforms, nobody gets up to speed right away, and everyone bumps up against roadblocks now and then. When you hit one of those speed bumps, you need knowledgeable tech support — and a partner who cares about your success. Look for a vendor that makes your success their priority, as Contacto does.



Conclusion

Contacto was purpose-built for today's mobile-first consumer world so businesses can deliver the fast, flexible, and frictionless customer support that shoppers want. The platform combines traditional and emerging communication channels with an easy-to-use interface and out-of-the-box customizability to fit your business and your shoppers.



Thanks for reading.

Would you like to learn more
and get started?

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