

The Guide to Delivering True Omnichannel Support

KUSTOMER GUIDE



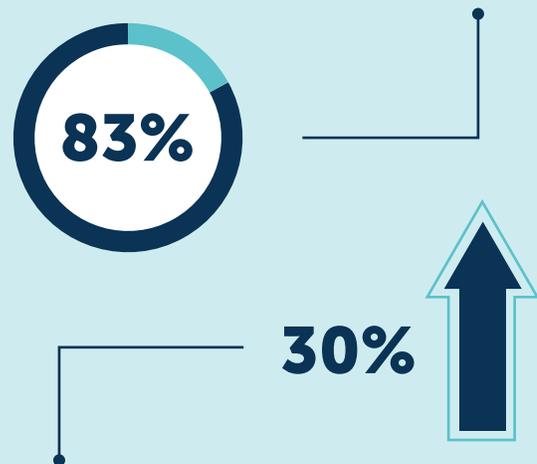
Introduction

In an age of instant gratification, consumer savviness has driven companies to become more customer-centric. However, as companies continually improve their customer experiences, the expectations of customers only continue to rise. Their needs must be immediately recognized, they demand high-quality results on the channels that are most convenient in their moment of need. And if they need to switch channels, they certainly don't want to repeat any information when interacting with the next agent.

Brands are doing their part to make themselves widely available and knowledgeable of their customers, 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 via omnichannel support.

But the concept of omnichannel customer service 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 in every interaction across channels to drive stronger, more meaningful customer relationships, increase revenue streams, and improve operational performance.

According to Aberdeen Group, best-in-class companies who have the strongest omnichannel customer engagement strategies have an average customer retention rate of 83%, compared to just 53% for other companies.



These companies are also increasing customer satisfaction by nearly 30% year over year, compared to barely 1% for all other companies.

This guide is meant to help your company become a leader by explaining what omnichannel support really means, and how to actually achieve it.

What you can expect:

- How to discern omnichannel support from multichannel support
- Why customers expect an omnichannel approach and how your company can benefit
- How to organize and empower your team to implement omnichannel communications
- Where technology fits in to your omnichannel customer service strategy

Omnichannel vs. Multichannel

Let's clear the air—multichannel support is not omnichannel support. Unfortunately, the two terms have almost become interchangeable, with many companies and technology providers conflating them. Multichannel support simply means offering customers more than one method for contacting customer service.

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 now via email, the chat team and email 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. In addition, 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.

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

- Like multichannel support, being available on any channel the customer wants to use to contact the company
- A customer-centric not ticket-centric approach to support
- Enabling customers and agents to freely move across channels throughout a single conversation
- Placing each customer in touch with the most appropriate resource as quickly as possible to ensure consistency and quality
- 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 after acquisition. Unfortunately, many companies struggle to create this type of service environment because sharing data between channels 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.

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.

The Benefits of True Omnichannel Support

Implementing an omnichannel support strategy means you're setting 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 best understand their needs and prepare for future interactions. It also means you're considering future revenue opportunities.



Preventing agent collision drives consistent resolution

Agent collision 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, hence the frustration and confusion.

In an omnichannel support strategy, agent collision never occurs. Communication channels are integrated, so 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 brands in the future.

Consistency in support earns 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 that lead to additional sales takes hold.

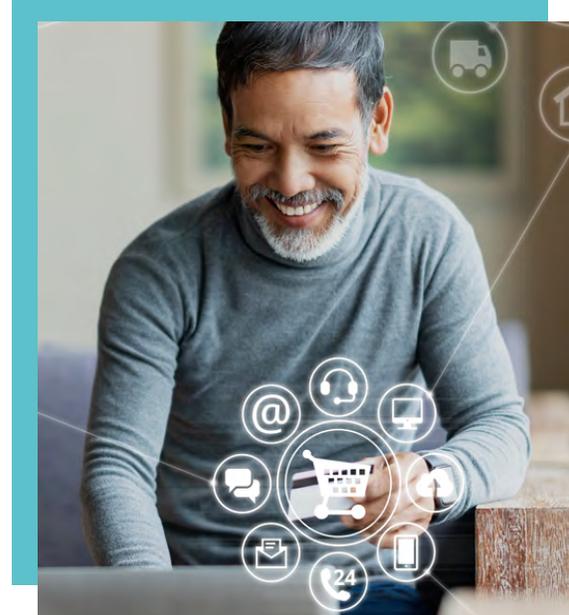
Improving operations and customer experience

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 with the brand 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 by sending inbound inquiries to the most appropriate channel or agent for resolution based on metrics, such as first call resolution and customer satisfaction.

How to Operationalize Omnichannel Support

Aside from thinking through the specific technology powering your support infrastructure, it's important to consider your company's internal needs in making omnichannel support a reality. 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.



Segment 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. If your agents have the freedom to switch channels through an interaction then connecting customer and agent becomes more critical. This will also lead to increased first call resolution as you are now routing customers to agents that are better prepared to handle the conversation.

For instance, a food and beverage supplier that handles inquiries around dietary restrictions may want to organize their team so agents sharing similar restrictions connect to those respective customers. Or it can be as simple as ensuring your VIP customers are always placed in touch with your top-performing agents, everytime. Segmenting your team by skill not only gives agents a comfortable head start when entering an interaction, but it provides a sense of purpose to their role beyond resolving issues, encouraging dedicated and insightful service.

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, collaboration 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.

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.

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.

As mentioned earlier, 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.

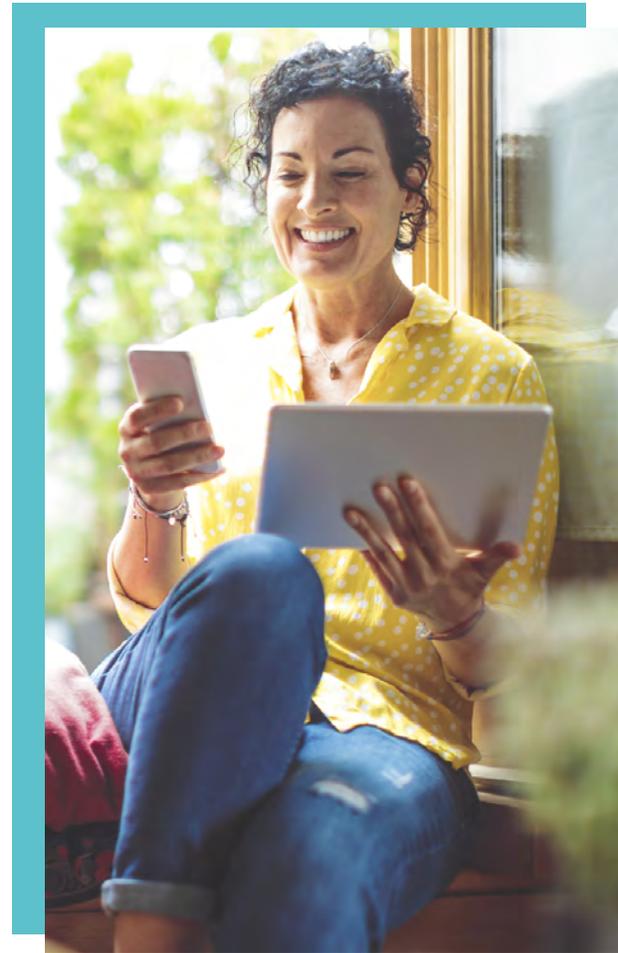
The result—agents are less stressed, acutely focused on satisfying customers and building genuine, valuable relationships, and consistently meeting and exceeding their SLAs.

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.

Customer service can move 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 call 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.



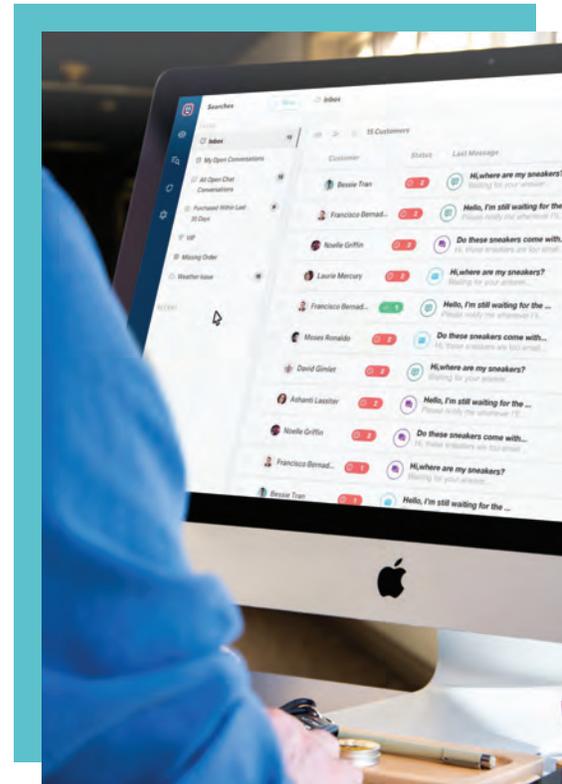
From a technology perspective, an omnichannel strategy requires that you have a support solution that can integrate your combination of communication channels in order to capture the free flow of conversations across channels and display the data in a single screen. A best-in-class solution should create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

An omnichannel strategy backed by a true omnichannel solution will quickly facilitate the customer service that drives loyalty and keeps your customer base and brand growing.

About Kustomer

Kustomer is the omnichannel SaaS platform reimagining enterprise customer service to deliver standout experiences – not resolve tickets. Built with intelligent automation, Kustomer scales to meet the needs of any contact center and business by unifying data from multiple sources and enabling companies to deliver effortless, consistent, and personalized customer service through a single timeline view.

Today, Kustomer is the core platform of some of the leading customer service brands like Ring, Rent the Runway, Glossier, Away, Glovo, Slice, and UNTUCKit. Headquartered in NYC, Kustomer was founded in 2015 by serial entrepreneurs Brad Birnbaum and Jeremy Suriel, raised over \$113.5 million in venture funding, and is backed by leading VCs including: Tiger Global Management; Battery Ventures; Redpoint Ventures; Cisco Investments; Canaan Partners; Boldstart Ventures; and Social Leverage.



Let us show you how to deliver true omnichannel support that provides efficient and effortless experiences for both customers and agents.

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