Contact Centres
The value of caring

Have customers changed post Covid?

Since 2020, we've had less face-to-face interactions with businesses and increased communications with contact centre agents. At the start of the pandemic businesses had to react drastically to the crisis and customers showed leniency for sub-standard services. With the pandemic now part of our normal life, it is no longer a valid excuse for poor customer services.

Adam French, consumer rights expert at Which? states;

"Customer service teams have had more than a year to adjust. So continuing to blame coronavirus for long waiting times is a poor excuse for bad service."

Hubspot's 'The State of Customer Service' report, states;

"customers are smarter, more sceptical, and have more options than before."

The Hubspot study asked customer service professionals their thoughts and if they agreed with the following statements;

86%
agree that customers are now smarter and more informed than in the past

93%
agree that customers have higher expectations than in the past

88%
agree that customers are more likely to share experiences now than in the past

Customer service has always been a priority but with more demanding and smarter customers businesses need to transform their offering.

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Empathetic service valued by customers
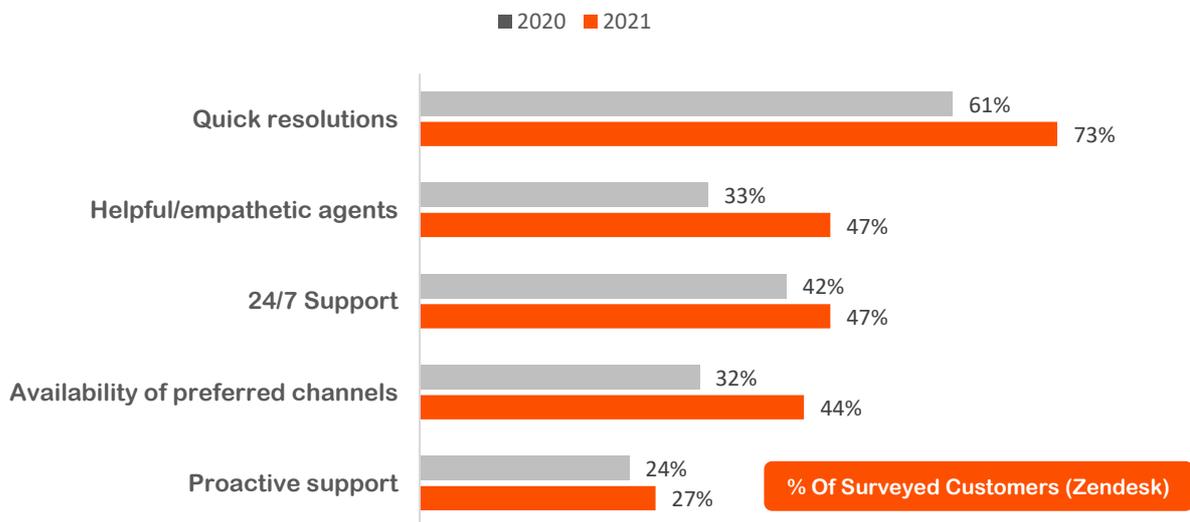
It's no surprise that customers want:

- Quick resolutions
- Access to customer service at their convenience
- Offered preferred channels of communication
- Proactive support

But Zendesks report reveals that customers also value helpful and empathic agents;

"Customers still value speed, but increasingly want empathy and access to preferred channels"

Being helpful and understanding has always been key to providing good customer service, but it holds more value in a post pandemic era. With more customers likely to go online or pick up the phone to engage with businesses there are more interactions taking place with contact centre agents so having a caring and humane workforce holds more importance.

47% of those surveyed in 2021 said empathy was important to them, compared to 33% in 2020

■ 2020 ■ 2021

Quick resolutions	61% / 73%
Helpful/empathetic agents	33% / 47%
24/7 Support	42% / 47%
Availability of preferred channels	32% / 44%
Proactive support	24% / 27%

**% Of Surveyed Customers (Zendesk)**

But what is empathy?
In an article by Peter Dorrington, Founder XMplify Consulting Ltd, defines empathy as:

"not a synonym for 'sympathy', neither is it about being 'chatty', or 'polite', or having a good telephone manner – it is about connecting at an emotional level."
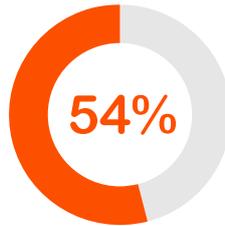
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Importance of being socially responsible

Being caring and considerate isn't limited to the agents. The Zendesk report also highlighted that customers want companies to be socially responsible.
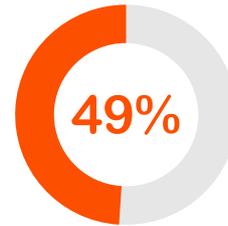
The Importance of Caring

63%

Social Responsibility

54%
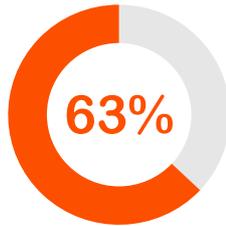
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

49%

Empathy

Having a formal Corporate Social Responsibility programme and an Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy can strengthen a company's image and reputation. This will help attract and retain clients.

Being socially responsible will also strengthen relationships with your existing workforce and appeal to new employees. Highly productive and positive employees should be a priority for all businesses but essential for those with staff who interact with consumers directly. But having written programmes and ticking a few boxes is not enough, companies must promote and support the policies so they became part of their ethos.

Look after your team

Hubspot's advice for businesses with a contact centre is to:
- Take care of your team - don't have an understaffed team
- Invest in your team - with efficient tools and training
- Empower your team - allowing them to resolve and provide solutions

Involve staff when creating company policies

When creating policies staff involvement is critical for employee engagement. Converge Point highlight how to manage policies:
- Involve employees in the policy creation process
- Ask your employees for their comments when renewing and reviewing policies
- Make policies easily accessible to all employees
- Keep policies short and simple
- Distribute new and updated policies in a timely, efficient manner
- Test employees' understanding of policies

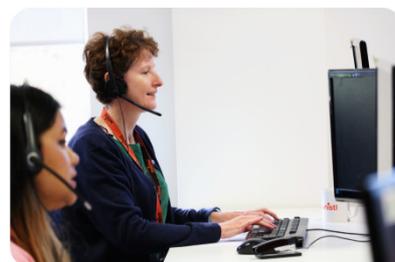**whistl**
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Contact centres you can count on

Whistl is the UK's leading provider of personalised contact centre solutions. With over 20 years' experience and a support team of over 350 agents we tailor our support to your needs, to provide exceptional customer experience.

About Whistl

Whistl is the UK's leading logistics specialist in e-fulfilment, contact centres, mail, and parcels.

We recognise the importance of our role in managing social, economic, and environmental issues. Corporate Social Responsibility is the principal way we seek to co-ordinate and manage our practices.

Our people are key to our success and we recognise their value by investing in development programmes to help them reach their potential.

Contact us

Whistl can support your business' customer service needs and all their multi-channel contacts.

Enquire now for your bespoke quote

01628 918 368 | www.whistl.co.uk/enquiries

Data Sources

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