

# Global State of Customer Service

The transformation of customer service  
from 2015 to present day

# Table of contents

1	Introduction
2	Brand loyalty
10	Perceptions and frustrations
25	Omnichannel experience
40	Digital and emerging trends
47	What we've learned



Customer service is not a department—  
it's everyone's job.

—Anonymous

# Introduction: today's realities and expectations for customer service

Since the first Global State of Customer Service study in 2015, customer expectations have continued to rise over time. Consistently delivering exceptional service is challenging for any brand, especially with fierce competition in an overcrowded market, not to mention the continual onslaught of new and emerging technologies that promise to uplift customer satisfaction. One constant in this volatile landscape is that **brand differentiation is aligned with customer experience**. Organizations that understand this plurality, remain agile and attentive, and learn to create a consistently positive customer experience will prosper and move forward. **Organizations that are less fluid and fail to respond to the customer's expectations will contract and eventually fade from view.**

Customers continue to evolve as does the technology that supports fast, first time delivery of solutions to customer issues. **To create a positive customer experience, organizations must understand customer behaviors, preferences, and expectations.** This knowledge, combined with the latest technology and the ability to reimagine the delivery of customer service, organizations can then consistently craft experiences that build loyalty and engagement.

The Microsoft 2019 State of Global Customer Service survey polled 5,088 individuals across Brazil, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States to better understand the customer, their expectations, frustrations, and perceptions of the delivery of customer service. Our results reconfirm that customer service plays a pivotal role in the customer experience and serves as a brand differentiator, as **90% of respondents indicated that customer service is important to their choice of and loyalty to a brand.**

We hope you'll find this year's insights beneficial, especially some of the trends we've found over the past five years. It is our hope that this report will provide greater clarity about your customers and spark inspiration within your organization to help you consistently deliver an exceptional customer experience.

# Brand loyalty

Customers have grown increasingly savvy about service and support and expect the organizations they do business with to be equally as astute. Expectations remain high as 90% of customers continue to place a high value on the quality of customer service when choosing or remaining loyal to a brand. As customer expectations are shaped by their previous experiences, businesses need to rise to the occasion by continuously meeting or exceeding these expectations. **Should those expectations fall short, 58% of customers show little hesitation in severing the relationship.**

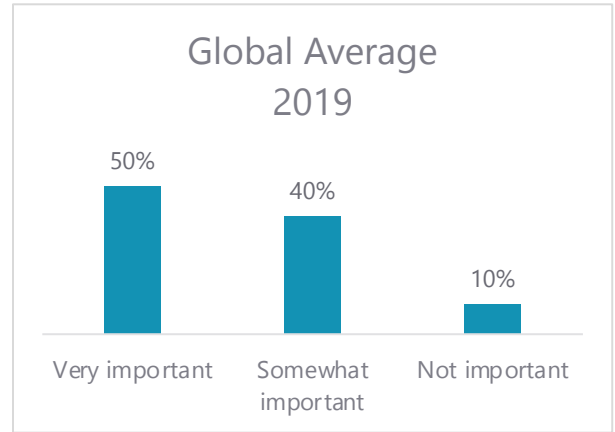
Customers are constantly changing, seeking more than just answers to issues from customer service agents. They want to be recognized, to be known, to be understood. **More than two-thirds of customers want an organization to reach out and engage with proactive customer notifications.** This proactive experience feeds the customer's need to be recognized, and in turn, generates customer engagement and strengthens loyalty.

**Optimism continues to be strong with 55% of customers expecting better customer service year over year.** This is especially true amongst those age 18-34 with 70% indicating rising expectations looking forward. Thus, delivering consistent exceptional customer service will continue to build loyalty and strengthen the customer relationship, which in turn means revenue for the business.

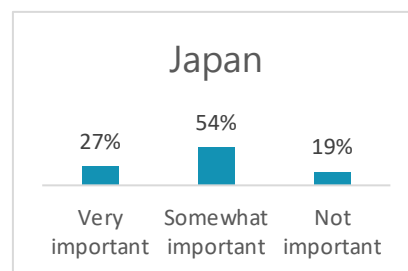
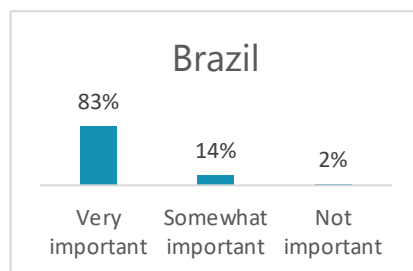
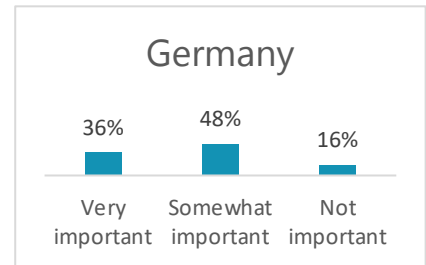
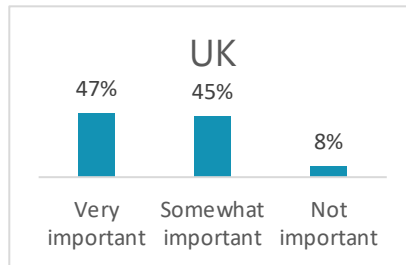
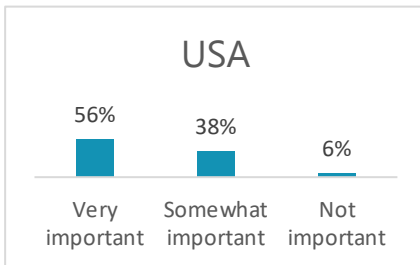
Customer expectations and needs continue to evolve as both businesses and customers embrace new technologies in service delivery. Artificial intelligence (AI) enabled technologies can assist organizations in identifying customer trends and gaps in service delivery. Customer service managers can prioritize these insights to determine which will have the greatest impact. The more successful organizations will leverage these AI-powered business solutions to transform as customer needs continue to shift. Those organizations that fail to anticipate and proactively support their customers' needs will be left behind.

## Q1. How important is customer service in your choice of, or loyalty to, a brand?

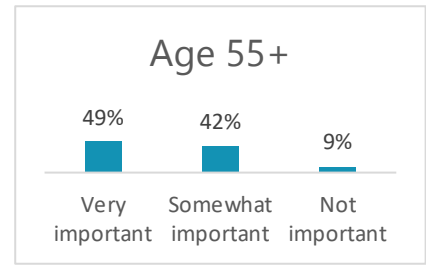
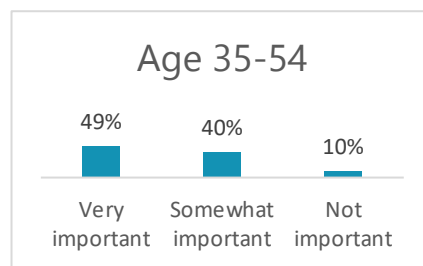
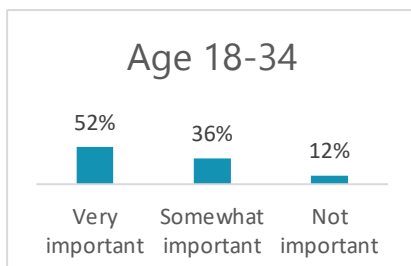
Globally, 90% of consumers believe customer service is somewhat to very important in the choice of a brand. While the US (94%), UK (92%) and Brazil (97%) all exceeded 90%, Japan and Germany were slightly more forgiving, pulling the average lower with 81% and 85%, respectively. Interestingly, **more than 88% of all age groups considered customer service important in their purchasing decisions.**



### By country

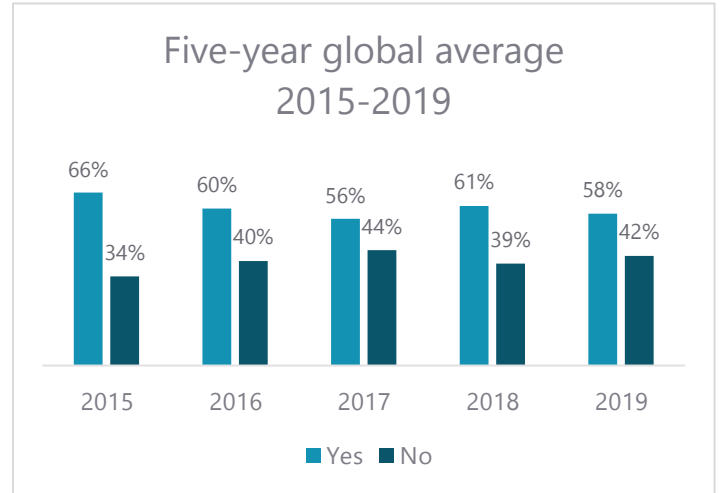


### By age group

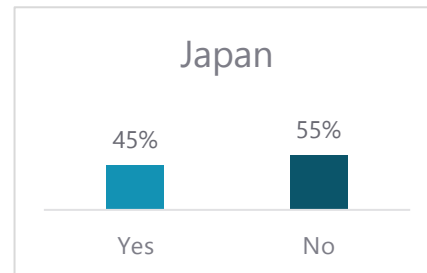
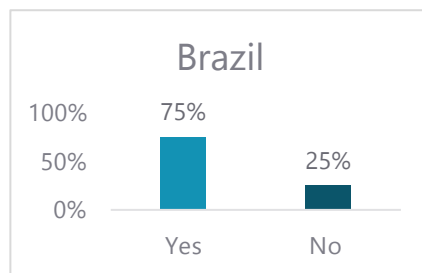
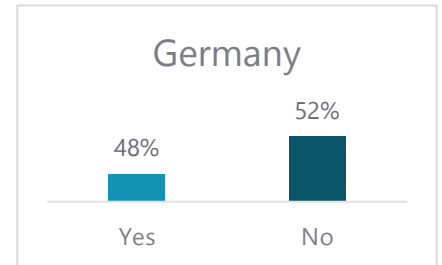
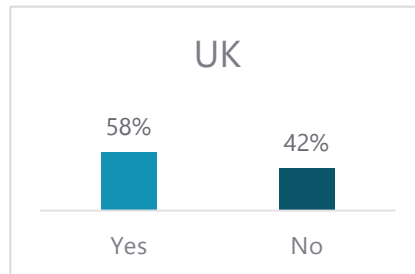
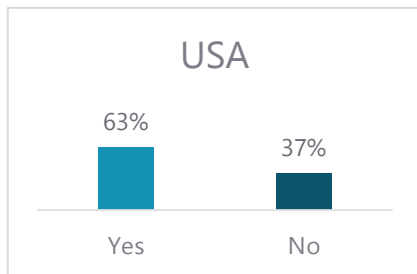


## Q2. Have you ever stopped doing business with a brand due to a poor customer service experience?

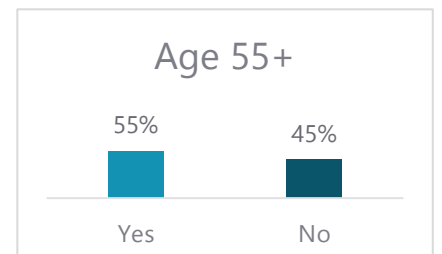
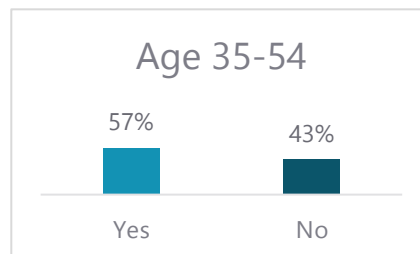
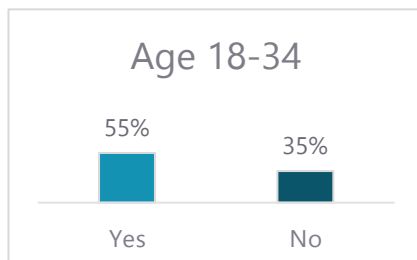
**Nearly two-thirds (58%) of consumers will sever a relationship with a business due to poor customer service.** This year's study found 75% of consumers in Brazil are more apt to sever a relationship with a business with poor service. The US followed with 63% and the UK close behind with 58%. Japan is the most forgiving with only 45% ending the relationship.



### By country



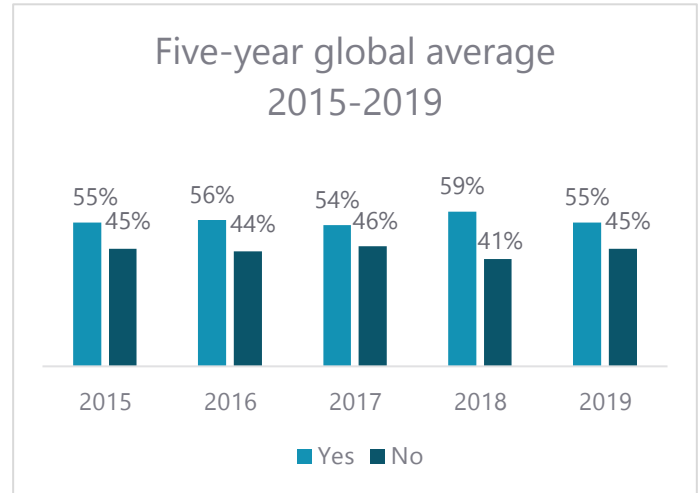
### By age group



### Q3. Do you have higher expectations for customer service now than you had a year ago?

**Globally, 55% of consumers have higher expectations for customer service than one year ago.** However, expectations seem to be weakening slightly, except for Brazil with 85% having higher expectations—a three-point increase from 82% in 2018. Excluding Brazil, the global average falls to 48%. Including Brazil raises the global average by a whopping 7 points. However, globally, **expectations are highest among those age 18-34 at 70%, followed by ages 35-54 at 57%, and 55+ at 45%.**

High turnover and an inexperienced labor pool with a business culture of historically constrained IT expenditures, has also contributed to Brazilian customer service to lag technologically behind its US, UK, German, and Japanese cousins. These combined factors could be contributing to the high expectations of Brazilian customer service.

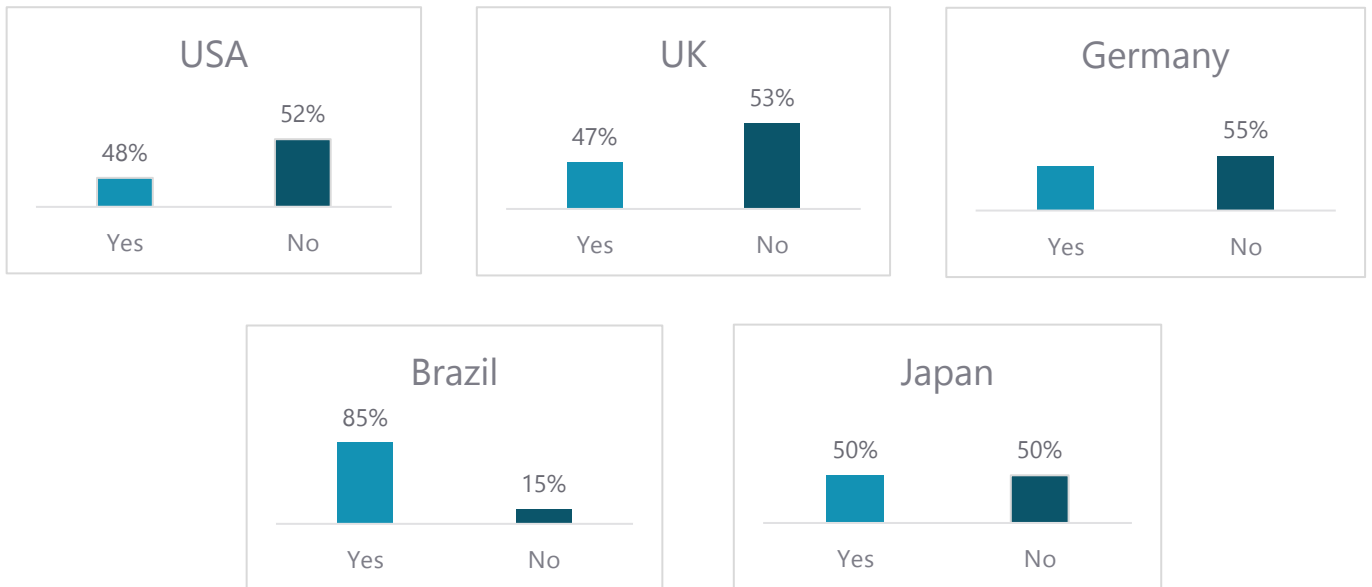


Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

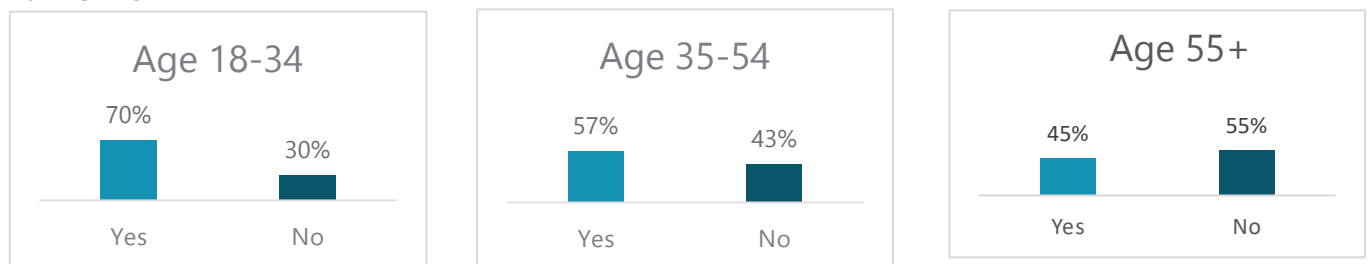
—Theodore Roosevelt

### Q3. Do you have higher expectations for customer service now than you had a year ago?

#### By country



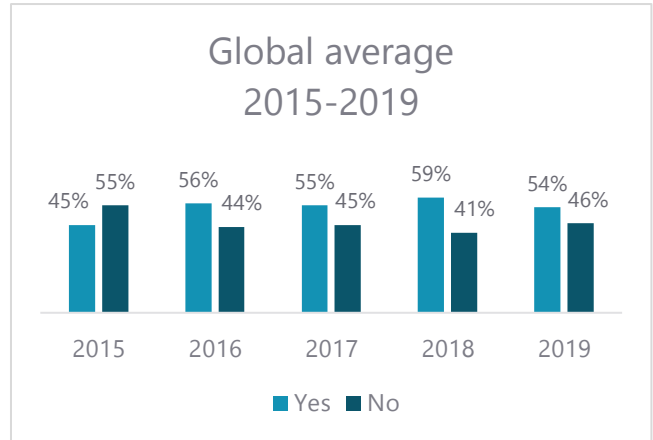
#### By age group



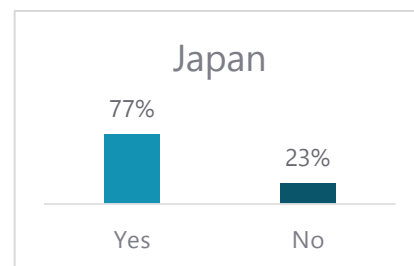
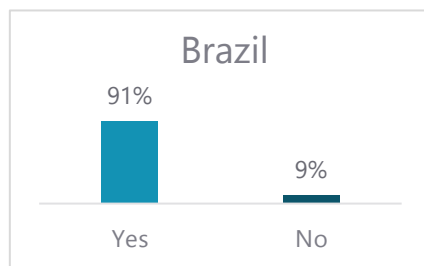
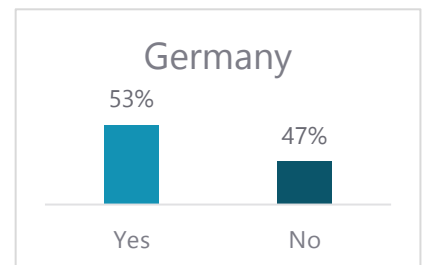
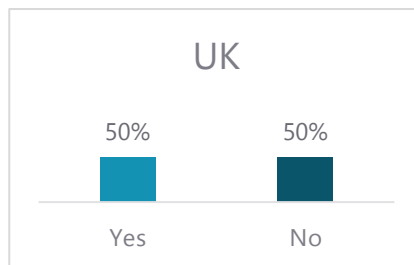
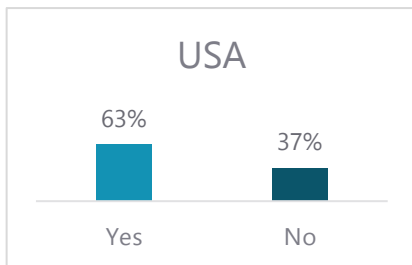


## Q4. Do you have a more favorable view of brands that offer or contact you with proactive customer service notifications?

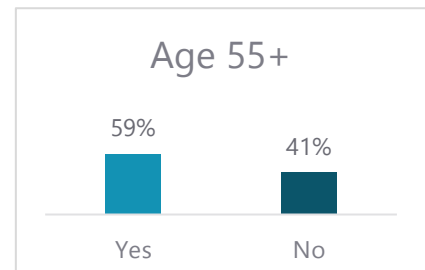
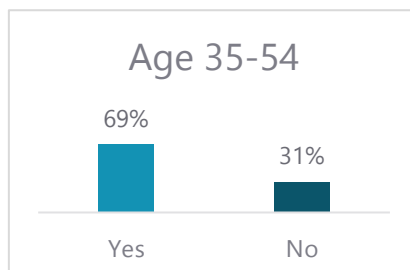
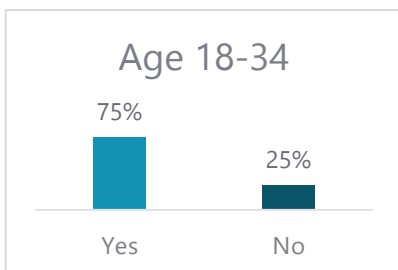
**Globally, two-thirds (67%) found proactive customer service notifications favorable**, with Brazil leading the cheers with 91%. The UK came in with a lukewarm 50%. Interestingly, 75% of respondents between the ages of 18-34 overwhelmingly favored proactive customer service, while 69% of ages 35-54 were favorable, and just 59% expressed favorability for ages 55+.



### By country



### By age group



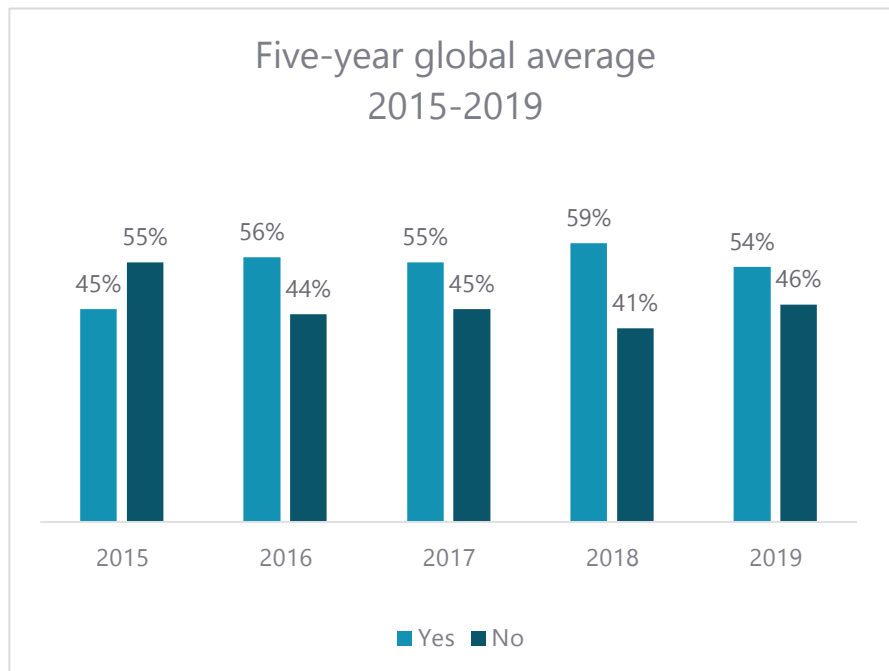
## Q5. Do you have a more favorable view of brands that respond to customer service questions or complaints on social media?

**Globally, 54% of respondents had a more favorable view of brands that responded to customer service questions or complaints on social media.** Surprisingly, the US and UK were the least impressed with 33% and 34%, respectively. Germany and Japan reported a more favorable view with 56% and 60%, respectively.

A whopping 89% of Brazilians have a favorable view of brands that respond to questions or complaints via social media. A reported 122 million<sup>1</sup> Brazilians are on social media (87.7% of the country's internet population) and spending an average of 3.4 hours each day on social media. It's no wonder they hold a favorable view.

Young adults were by far the earliest adopters of social media in the US with other age groups following later. If this trend translates globally, it is no surprise that 80% of those 18-34 have a favorable view to brands responding to customer service issues via social media. Conventional wisdom holds true with 59% favorable of those age 35-54 and those age 55+ trailing behind with only a 35% thumbs up.

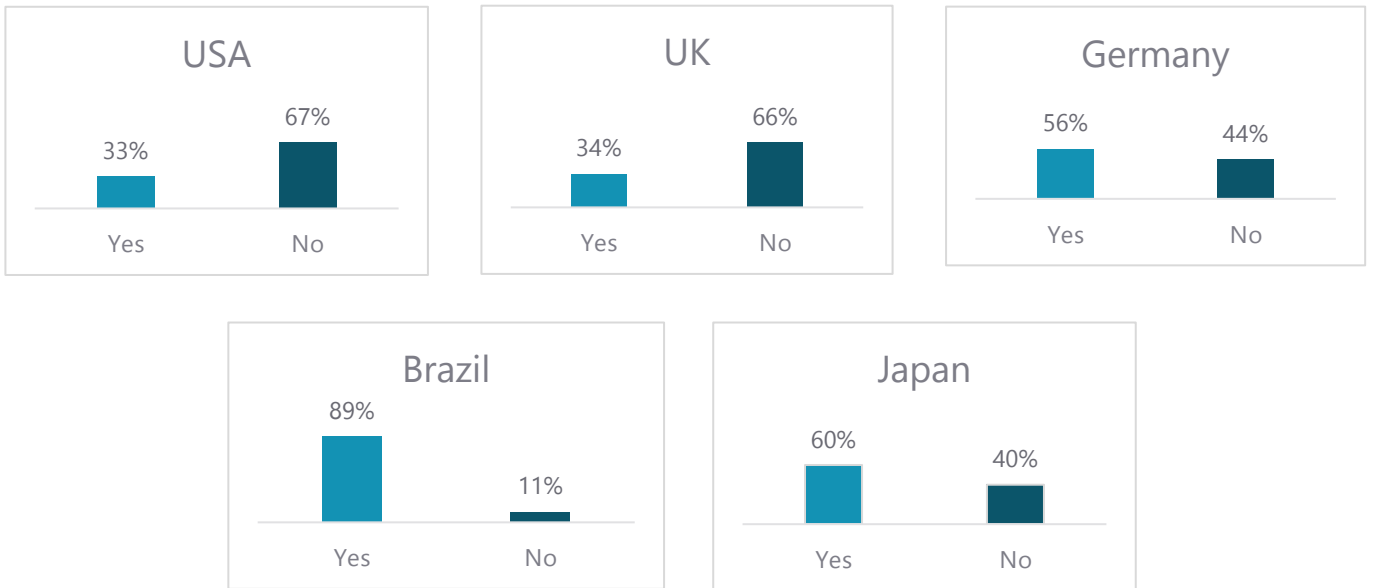
Over the past five-years, the global breakdown has been relatively flat, except for a slight spike in 2018; **however, the age breakdown across the globe is interesting as no matter which country, generational differences on matters of social media support are the same.**



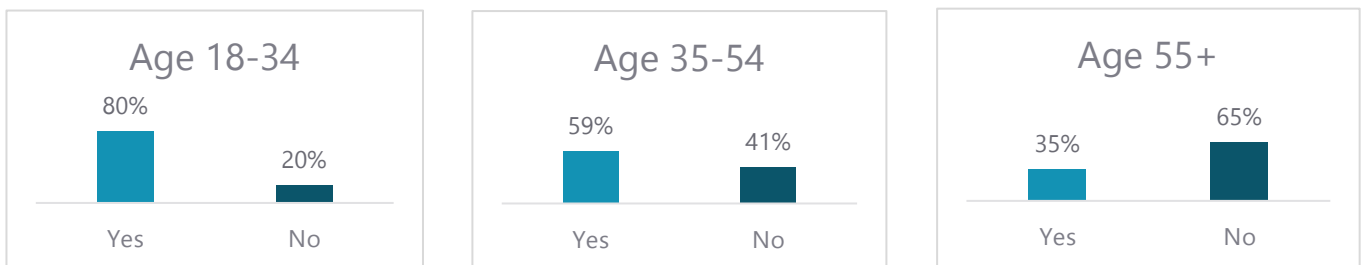
1. "Digital in 2017: South America," We are Social, SlideShare.net.  
 2. "The Evolution of Social Media in Brazil," Joao Citounadin, The Brazilian Report.

## Q5. Do you have a more favorable view of brands that respond to customer service questions or complaints on social media?

### By country



### By age group



# Perceptions and frustrations

**Customers continue to believe customer service is getting better at 63%.** This is interesting considering when asked if getting questions answered was becoming easier, respondents were more evenly split with one-third believing getting answers was easier, a third believing it had grown more difficult and a third seeing no difference whatsoever. Customers continue to expect service will get better despite two-thirds having seen no improvement in getting answers.

Customers across all age groups, however, were united as to what factors contribute to good and poor customer service experiences. Getting the issue resolved the first time topped the list in delivering a positive experience. This was followed by a knowledgeable agent, and lastly, not having to repeat the same information across channels.

Conversely, conventional wisdom prevailed as customers agreed that their greatest frustration was an agent's lack of knowledge, followed by the inability to resolve an issue. Lastly, customers grow frustrated when they must repeat the same information. These frustrations weigh heavily on customers as 58% have stopped doing business with an organization due to poor service.

The factors for good and poor customer service are the same and can be remedied by leveraging AI-enabled technology and well-trained agents. Well-trained agents backed with the right tools can resolve customer issues quickly. **Current customer service applications can deliver an omnichannel experience so if one or multiple channels are used by the customer, a holistic view of the customer journey is available to the agent—**negating the customer ever having to repeat the same information again.

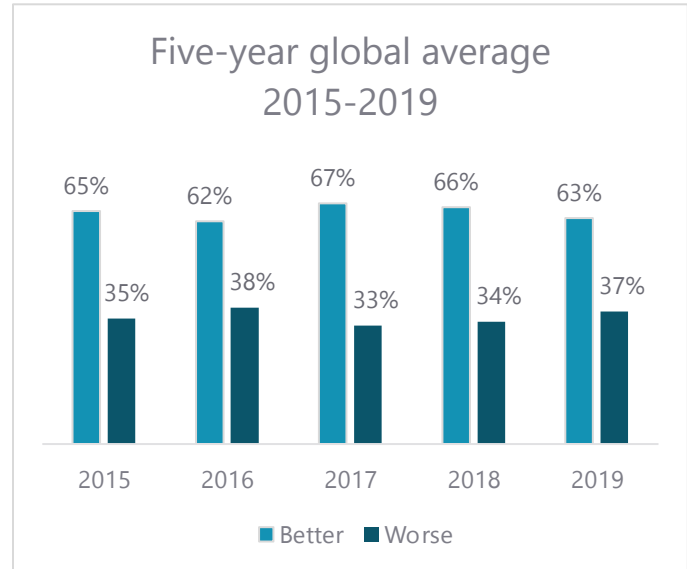
**An up-to-date article knowledgebase provides a solid foundation to improve customer issue resolution.** AI-enabled customer service applications can save time by searching and presenting articles to the agent associated with the topic being discussed during the customer interaction. Self-service portals with a current knowledgebase can add to the experience. AI-enabled virtual agents can suggest articles to customers, which can facilitate issue resolution, creating a more positive experience. However, if the article knowledgebase is not kept current, the system breaks down in domino fashion—impacting agent knowledge and failing to resolve customer issues quickly.

## Q6. Overall, do you feel the quality of customer service is getting better or worse?

Very little change from year to year. Globally, 63% of respondents believe customer service is getting better. **Those with the belief that customer service is becoming worse grew by three points to 37%.** The only two outliers are Japan and Brazil, with 73% and 81% believing customer service is becoming better.

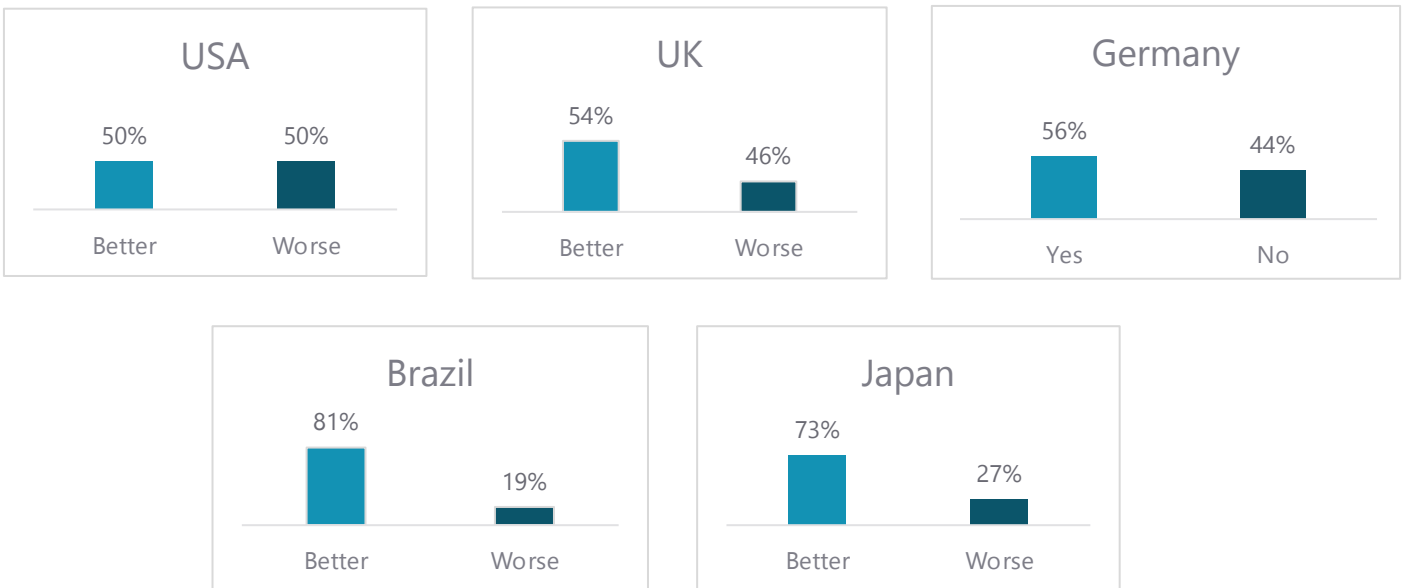
Overall, customers are growing more and more savvy, and thus, customer expectations continue to rise. Fortunately, customer service organizations generate volumes of data and there are technologies available to digest and analyze this data so companies can continue to meet or exceed expectations, ensuring exceptional customer service.

At first glance, Japan appears as an anomaly with 73% believing customer service is getting better. Japan is well-known for its incredibly polished customer service, culture of respect, and pride of workmanship. These are well-known tenants of the Japanese customer experience.

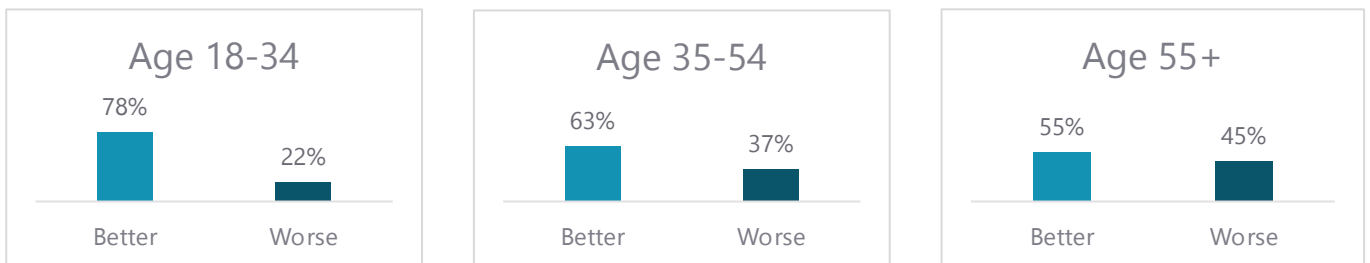


## Q6. Overall, do you feel the quality of customer service is getting better or worse?

### By country



### By age group



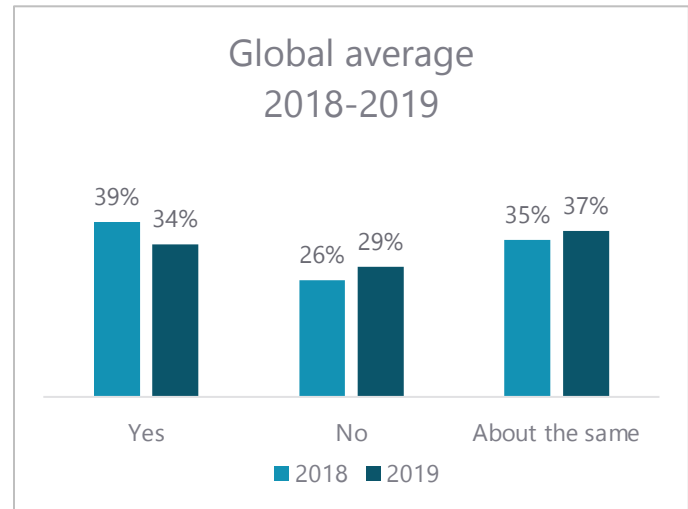
## Q7. Is engaging with customer service to get your questions answered getting easier?

**Just over a third of respondents (34%) believed getting questions answered is getting easier**, which is a decrease of 5 points, or 39%, from 2018.

Respondents citing greater difficulty in getting answers rose to slightly less than one third at 29%, a three-point increase from the prior year.

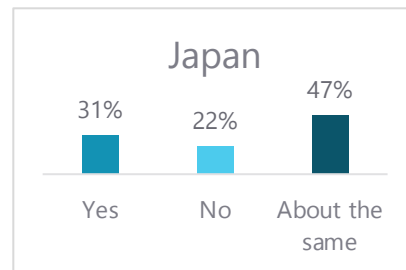
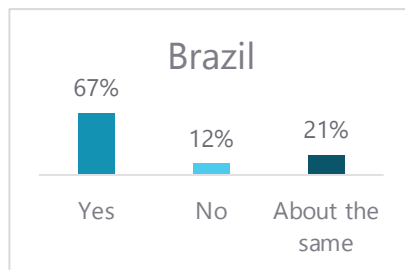
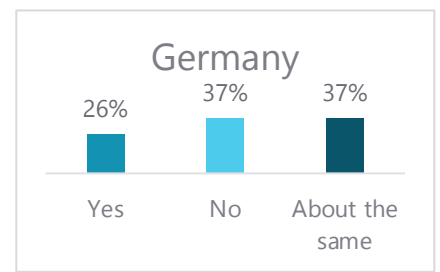
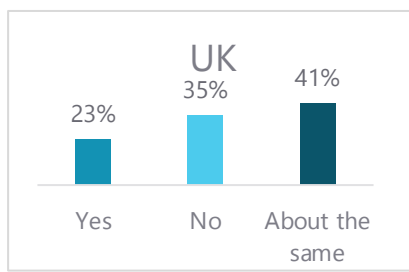
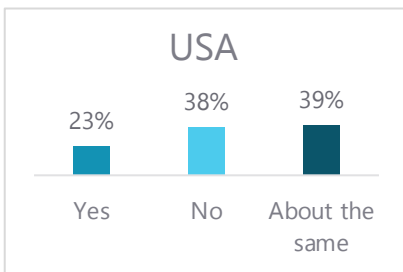
Those reporting no difference from year to year were at 37%, a two-point increase from 2018.

Brazil showed great optimism with 67% believing their questions are getting answered with greater ease, while conversely, the US and UK hunkered down at only 23% believing questions are getting answered easier.

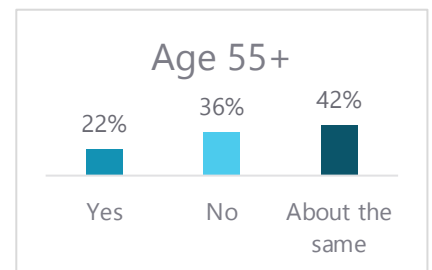
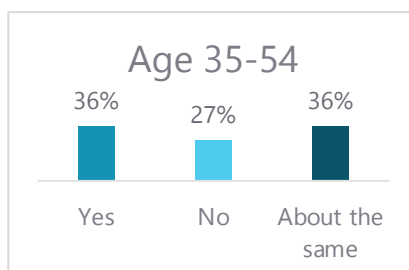
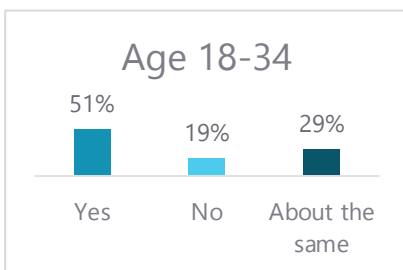


## Q7. Is engaging with customer service to get your questions answered getting easier?

### By country



### By age group

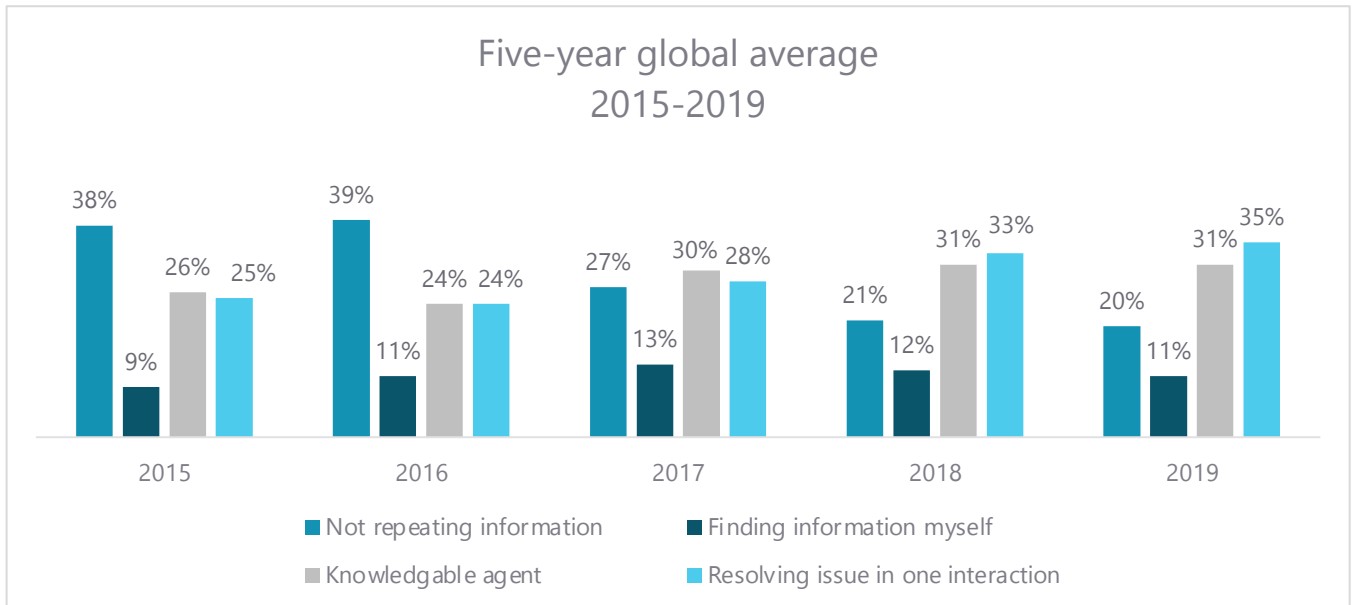
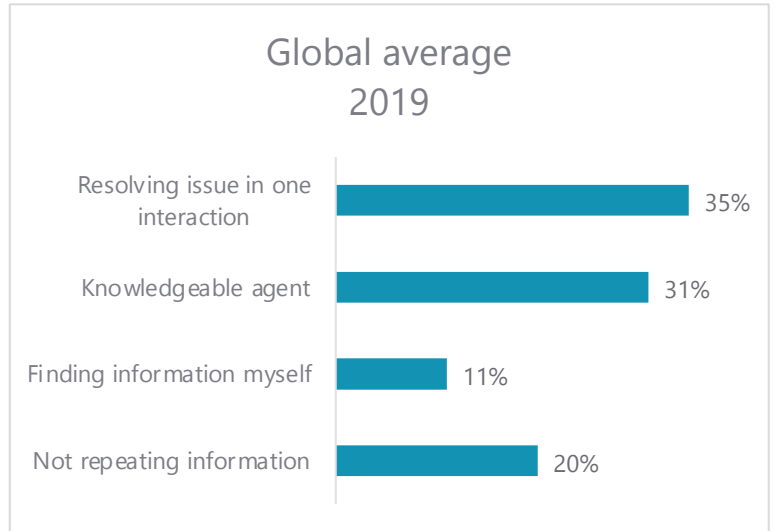




## Q8. What do you feel is the most important aspect of a good customer service experience?

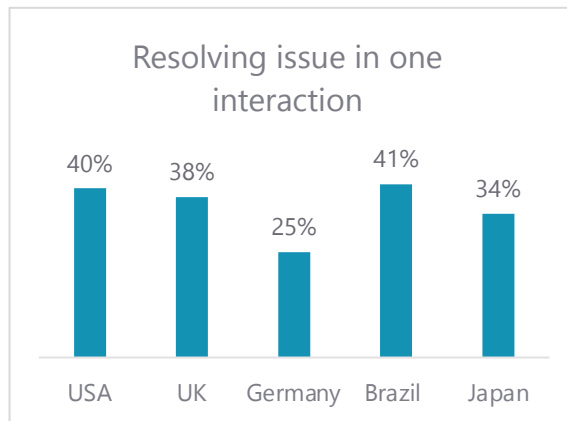
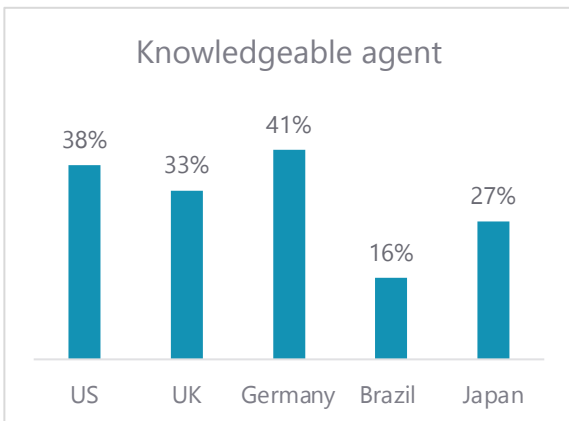
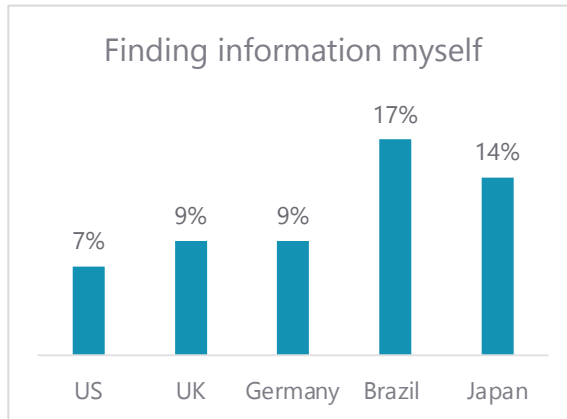
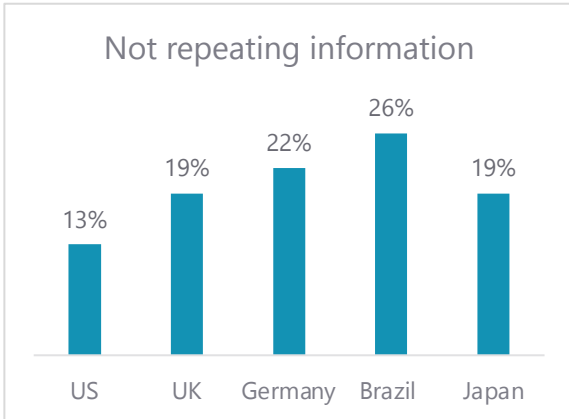
**Results in 2019 were clear: getting the issue resolved the first time is the most important aspect of good customer service.** Of growing importance is contacting a knowledgeable agent at 31%—a five-point increase since 2015.

Not having to repeat the same information when transferred is important to 20% of respondents, down 18 points since 2015. Resolving the issue through self-service is important to 11%, varying only two points since 2015.



## Q8. What do you feel is the most important aspect of a good customer service experience?

By country

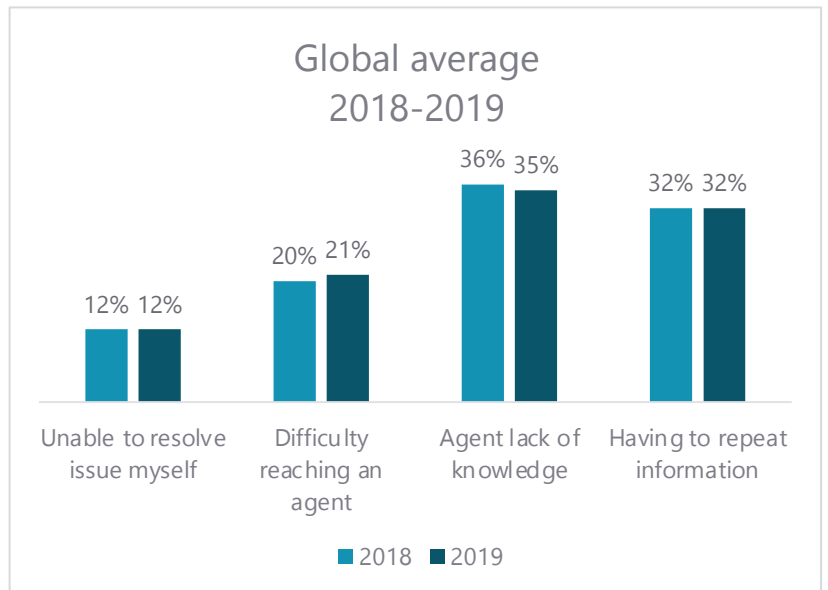


## Q9. What is the most frustrating aspect of a poor customer service experience?

Results are almost identical to last year. The top two answers are very close with **35% stating a representative’s lack of knowledge or inability to resolve the issue** ranked as the most frustrating aspect of poor customer service. This was followed by an irritated **32% saying it is having to repeat the same information multiple times.**

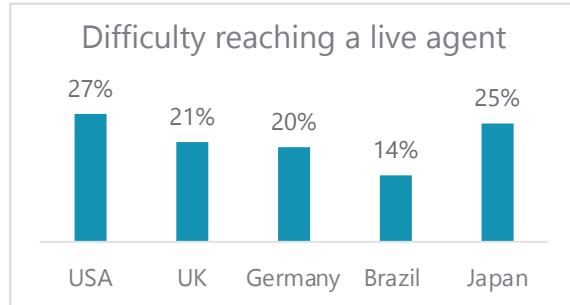
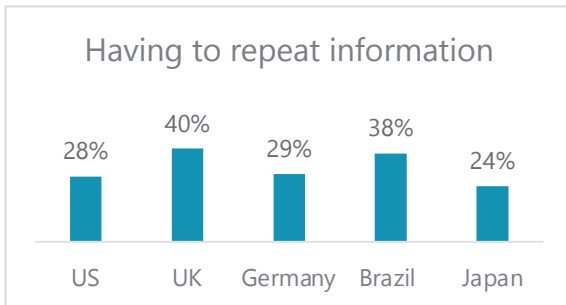
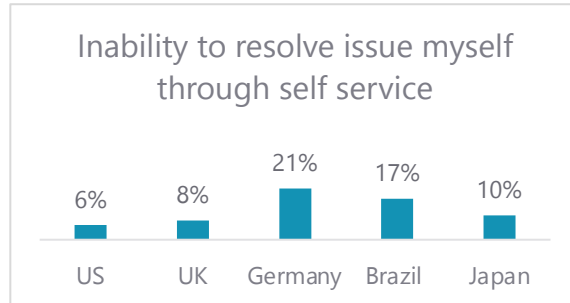
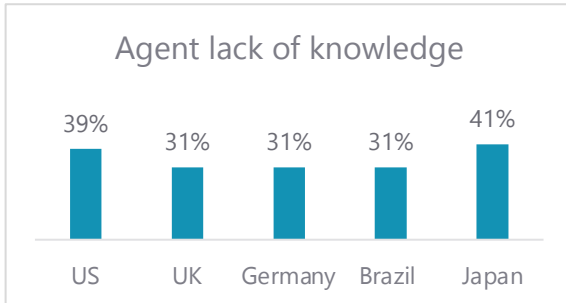
Knowledgeable agents are an important factor in creating a positive experience. However, empowering the agent with access to the customer’s journey is equally as important. **A 360-degree view into the customer journey arms the agent with the information needed to better serve the customer.** This inside view reduces any friction the customer may encounter during the experience and provides the agent with the opportunity to personalize the customer experience.

**Only 21% of respondents reported difficulty or the inability to reach an agent** as the most frustrating aspect of poor customer service. The inability to resolve the issue through self-service ranked as most frustrating by only 12% of respondents.



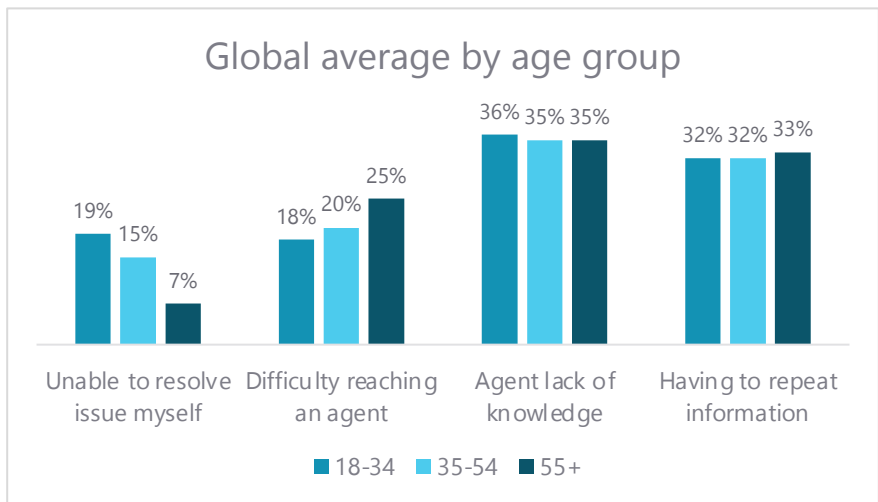
## Q9. What is the most frustrating aspect of a poor customer service experience?

### By country



### By age group

Surprisingly, all age groups agreed that an agent’s lack of knowledge and having to repeat information are among the most frustrating aspects of poor service. However, the inability to resolve the issue through self-service was most frustrating to the “do-it-yourself” 18-34 age group. Difficulty reaching an agent peaked at 25% among those 55+. Those age 35-54 and 18-34 followed with 20% and 18%, respectively.

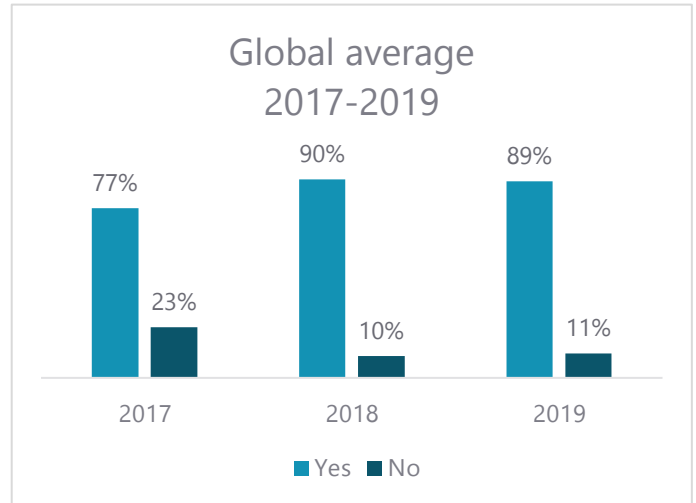


## Q10. Should organizations give you the opportunity to provide feedback?

**Overwhelmingly, customers want to provide feedback with 89% of respondents answering yes**, leading to a three-year average of 85.3%. Statistically, there was also little variation by age group.

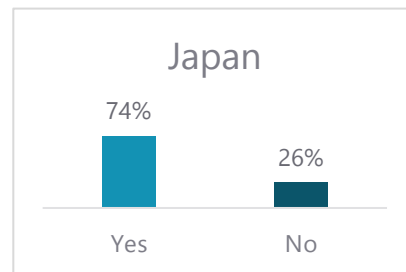
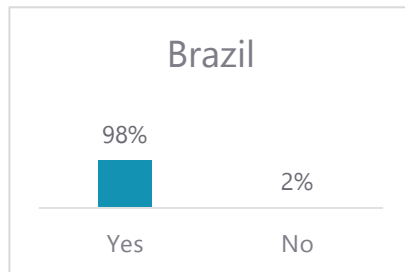
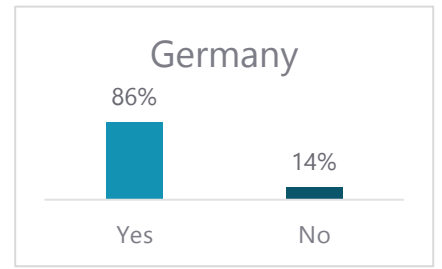
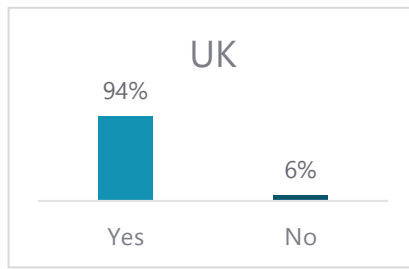
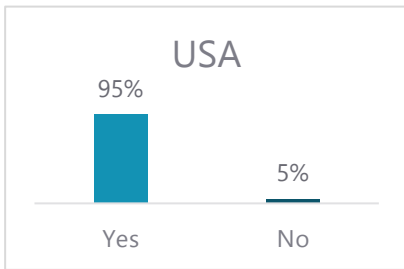
The results are clear: Just ask. Customers want to be heard and they want to share their experience.

And, the solution is so simple for organizations. Businesses can easily cinch this gap by automating a follow-up survey of the customer's support experience. An automated email survey following up on the customer service experience will go far to satisfy the consumers' need to provide feedback. Customer data can be gleaned and leveraged to improve the customer experience. Surveying customers following a support interaction is a win-win for the customer and for the business.

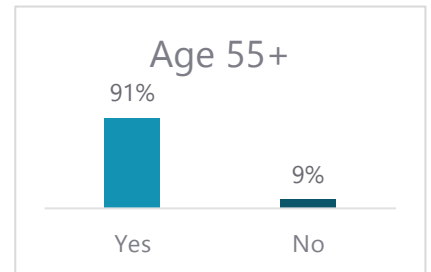
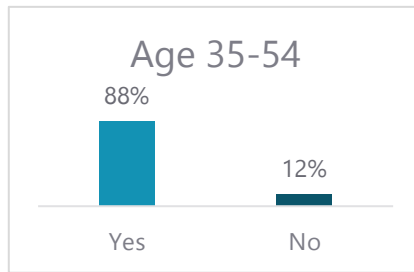
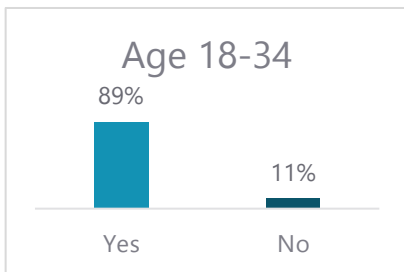


## Q10. Should organizations give you the opportunity to provide feedback?

### By country



### By age group

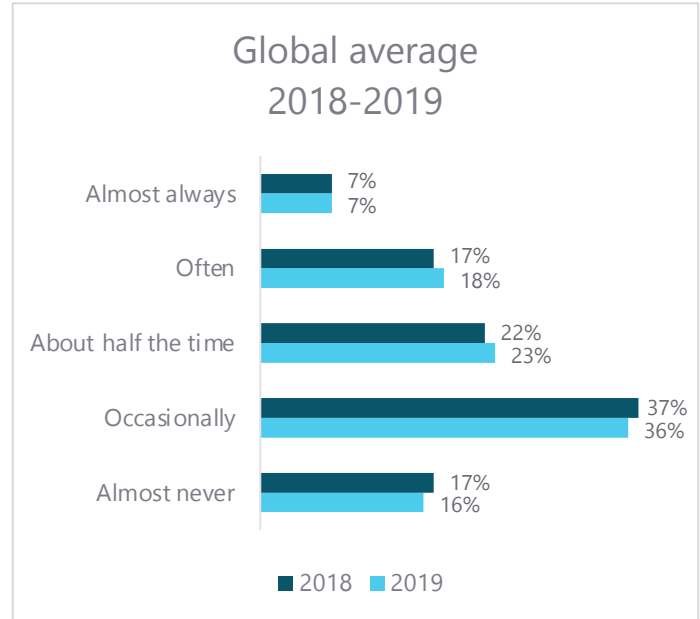


## Q11. How often are you given the opportunity to provide feedback?

Similar to 2018 results, **only 7% of companies almost always request feedback from customers.** Surprisingly, 44% of respondents in Japan cited that they are almost never given the opportunity to provide feedback.

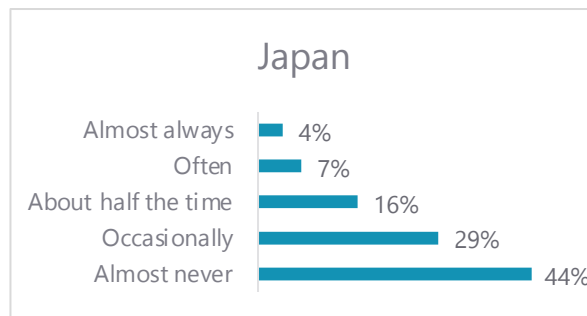
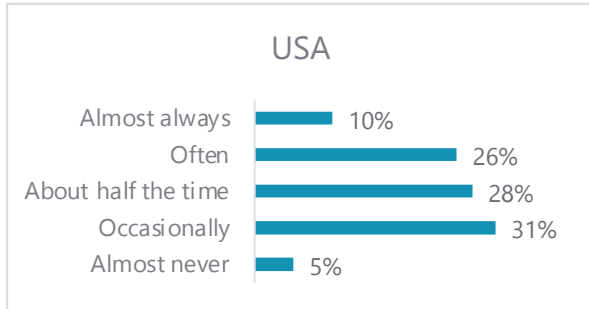
It is clear from respondent's answers that they want to share their experience, but organizations are still not inviting customers to share, let alone listen.

Again, the solution is simple: an automated follow-up email survey could significantly improve customer satisfaction while providing valuable insights into the customer experience.



## Q11. How often are you given the opportunity to provide feedback?

By country



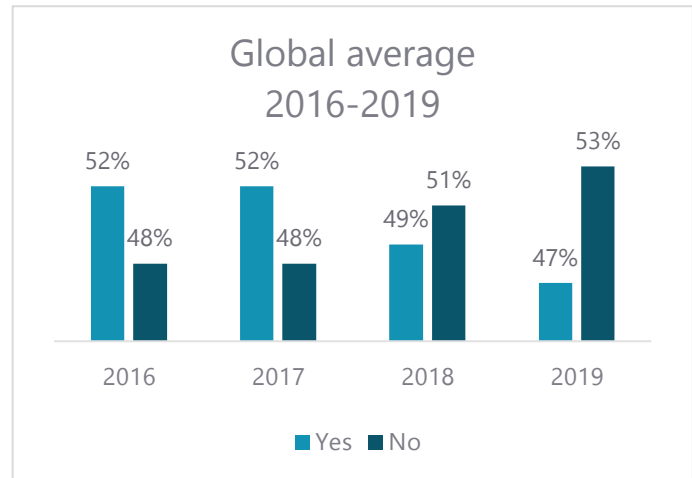


## Q12. Do you believe most brands take action on feedback provided by their customers?

**It's a close call with 47% of respondents answering yes and 53% answering no.** Brazil was the outlier with 54% believing organizations would take action from provided feedback. Year-over-year trends were relatively consistent with a nearly even split.

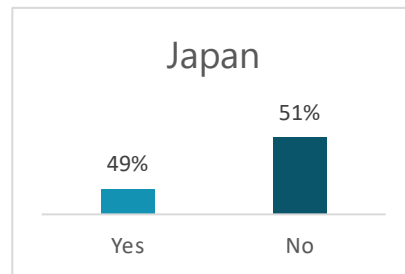
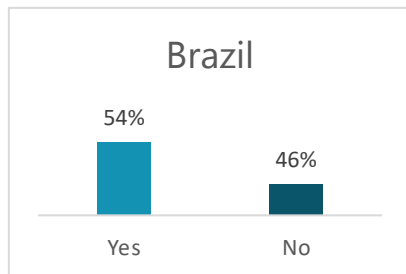
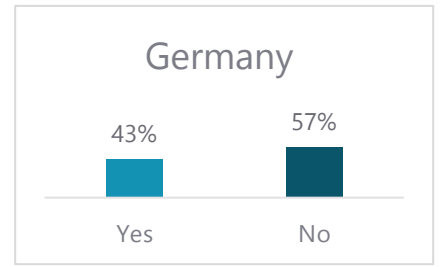
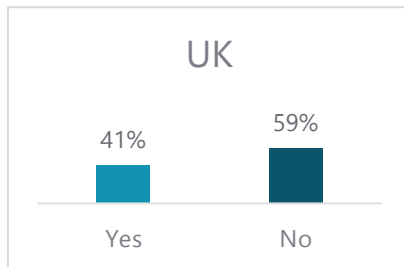
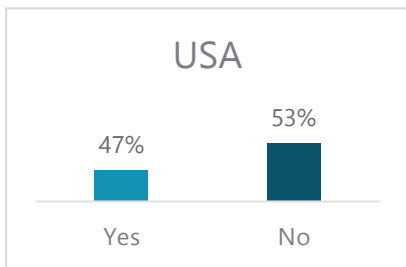
**Those aged 18-34 are the most optimistic about their feedback being used, with 56% believing the brand would act.** Respondents aged 55+ are less optimistic with only 42% believing feedback would prompt any action by the organization.

Customer surveys are one way for organizations to gain insights into operations and satisfaction. Organizations can also deploy AI-enabled analytics applications to consume and digest customer service data to identify gaps in service and opportunities to improve. AI-enabled analytics are useful when prioritizing initiatives to determine which provides the greatest impact. By leveraging customer feedback and analytics programs, customer service can not only identify areas for improvement, but can also enhance the customer experience.

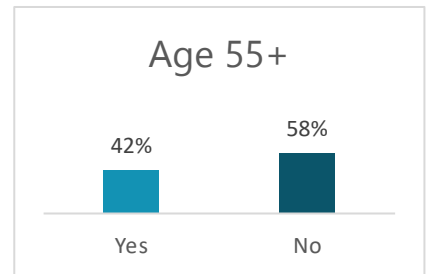
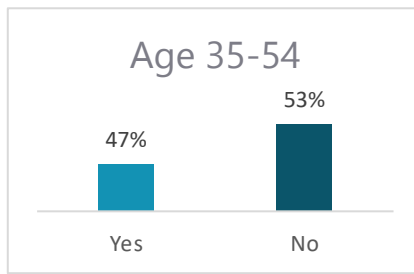
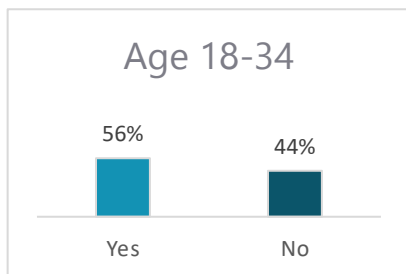


## Q12. Do you believe most brands take action on feedback provided by their customers?

### By country



### By age group



# Omnichannel experience

**The majority of customers continue to use 3 to 5 channels to get their issues resolved, and voice remains the preferred channel to contact customer service.**

Email, self-service, and chat follow closely behind. However, email has started to decline with self-service (53%) and chat (48%) growing in use.

This increase in self-service could be based in the advances in the technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, making self-service even easier to use by both the customer and the agent. It's therefore not by coincidence that **86% of respondents expect a self-service option and two-thirds try self-service first before contacting a live agent.**

The rise of chat may be that many small- to medium-sized businesses have caught up to their enterprise cousins with live chat implementations. Other factors may include the ease of use, convenience, and the ability to communicate in real-time. Some of the popularity in self-service and chat channels may also be due to their complementary nature.

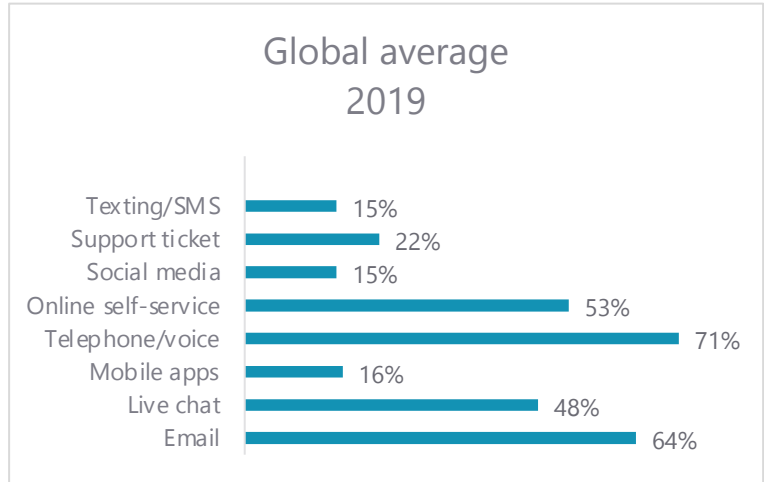
An overwhelming 75% of respondents want the agent to know who they are and their purchase history. This expectation has remained steady for the past five years. This year, respondents reported that **only occasionally (31%) did the agent have this information.**

Organizations can check off this frustration and replace it by exceeding another expectation with one solution: simply provide agents a 360-degree view of the customer journey across channels and over time. **A true omnichannel experience threads the customer profile and history across the channel landscape.**

Social media continues to trail as a customer service channel with 61% of respondents preferring to use other channels. Of those using social media for customer service, 74% did not expect a response within that same day; **however, 54% of respondents were favorable to a brand that answered customer service questions via social media.** It would appear that responding to customer service questions over social media is more important to customers than the timeliness of the response.

## Q13. Which of the following customer service channels have you used?

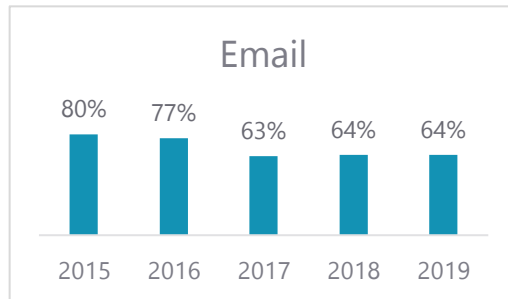
Overall, there was little change from 2018 in the channels used by consumers. **Using the telephone (or other voice channels) to reach customer service still rules with this channel being used most by 71% of respondents.** Voice is followed closely by email (64%), self-service (53%), live chat (48%), support ticket (22%), mobile (16%), social and SMS (tying at 15%).



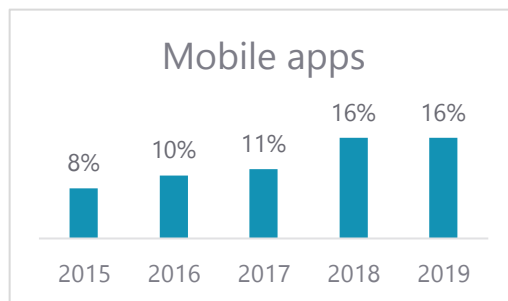
One of the most gradual declines has been in email. **In 2015, email was used by 80% of respondents and has fallen steadily to 64% in 2018 and 2019.**

### Five-year global average 2015-2019

Mobile apps have risen in use with only 8% in 2015 and doubling to 16% in both 2018 and 2019.



Online self-service started off with a bang with 59% in 2015, dropping in 2016 and 2017. This channel has rebounded with increased usage with 53% in 2019. The increase in usage may be due to more organizations offering self-service portals and FAQs for 24/7 customer service and advances in the self-service technology.



## Q13. Which of the following customer service channels have you used?

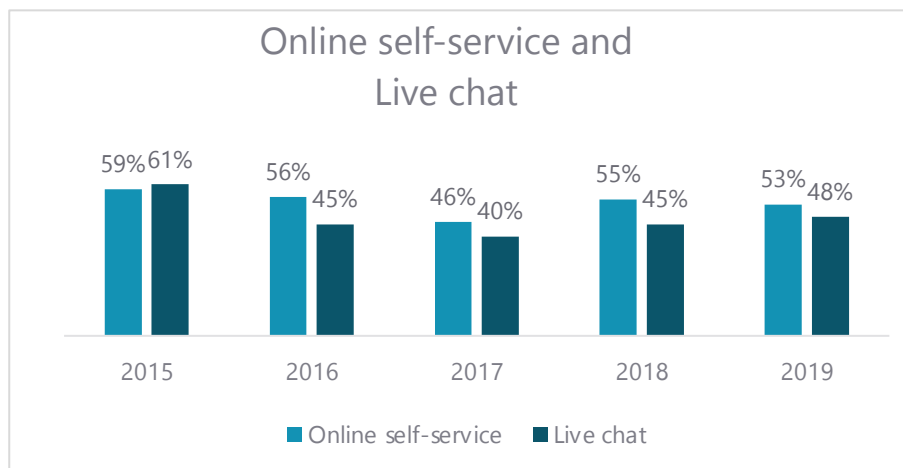
Chat, like self-service, started off strong with 61% of respondents using chat in 2015. However, the use of chat fell in 2016 and again plummeted to its lowest point with only 40% of respondents using the channel in 2017. Studies indicate that this drop off in consumer use may be partially due to the evolving nature of chat and the inability to meet growing demand for the technology. During this time, demand for live chat far exceeded supply, creating greater difficulties for small and medium businesses to contract and implement chat than their enterprise cousins; therefore, live chat was simply not available to use.

Live chat technology has made significant strides since with the addition of AI,

machine learning (ML), and business intelligence (BI). Chat is much easier to deploy and is a low-effort customer service tool, offering personalized, real-time communication with the ability to automate routine answers. These new capabilities may contribute to the gain of 8 points in usage since 2017 to 48% in 2019.

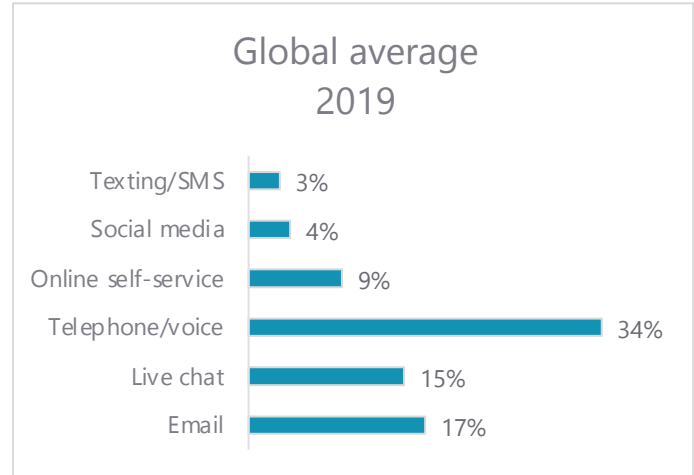
**It is also worth noting that live chat and self-service naturally complement each other in the customer’s quest for service.** Many organizations offer a self-service portal with an optional chat channel should consumers wish to reach out to a live agent. This pairing of channels may also contribute to their growing popularity.

Five-year global average 2015-2019

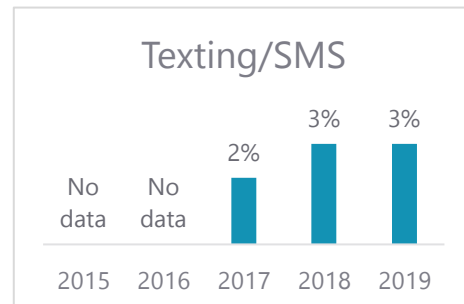
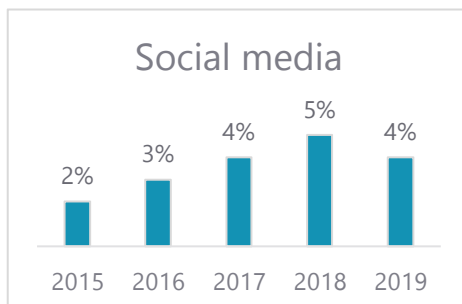
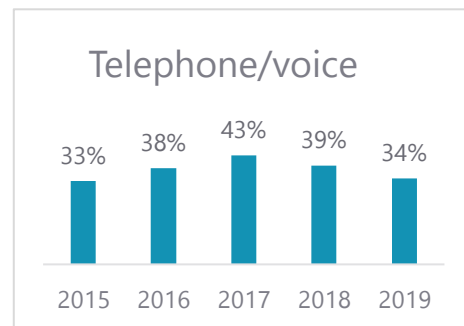
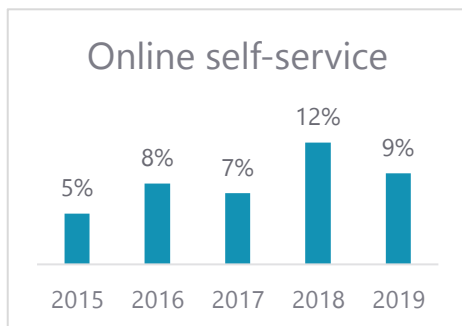
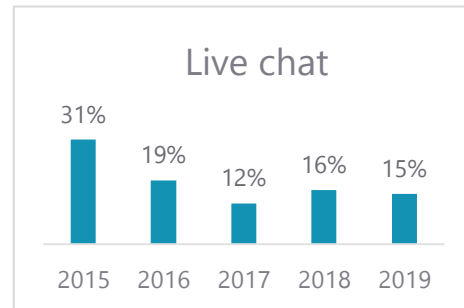
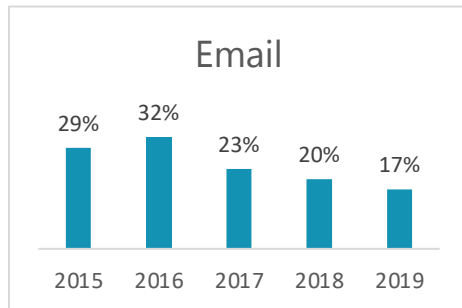


## Q14. Which channel would you ideally prefer to use?

**Again, voice is the clear winner with a preference of 34% globally;** however, this is a drop of 5 points from 2018. Email is a distant runner up at 17%, a drop of 3 points from prior year. Live chat was the third most preferred channel at 15%, and self-service came in at at 9%. SMS or text messaging pulled up the rear at 3%.

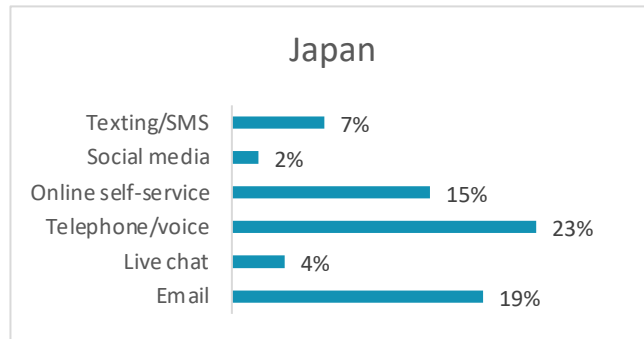
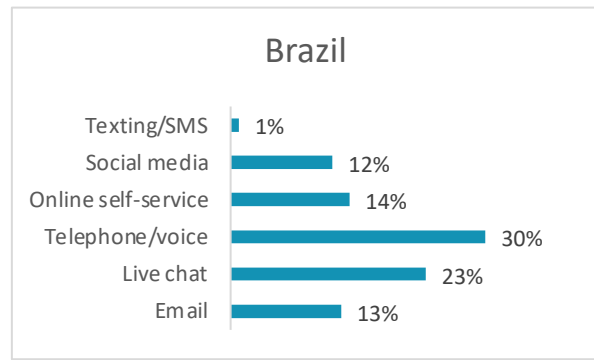
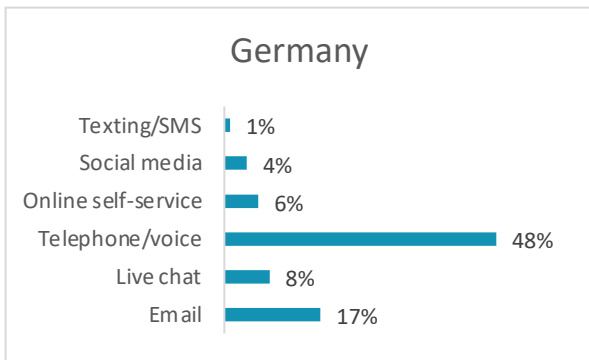
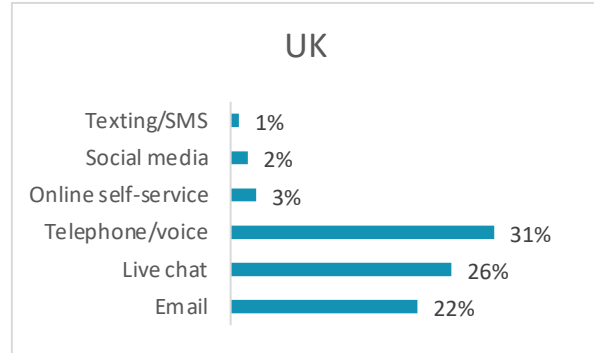
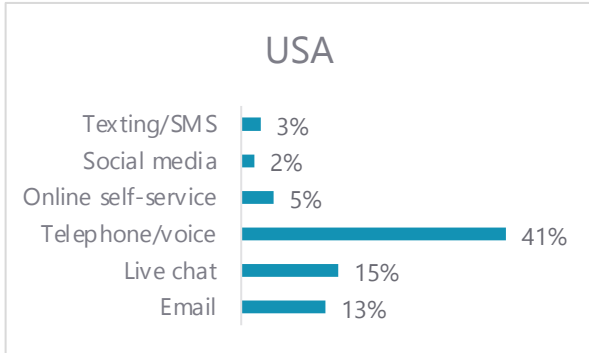


### Five-year channel global average 2015-2019



## Q14. Which channel would you ideally prefer to use?

By country

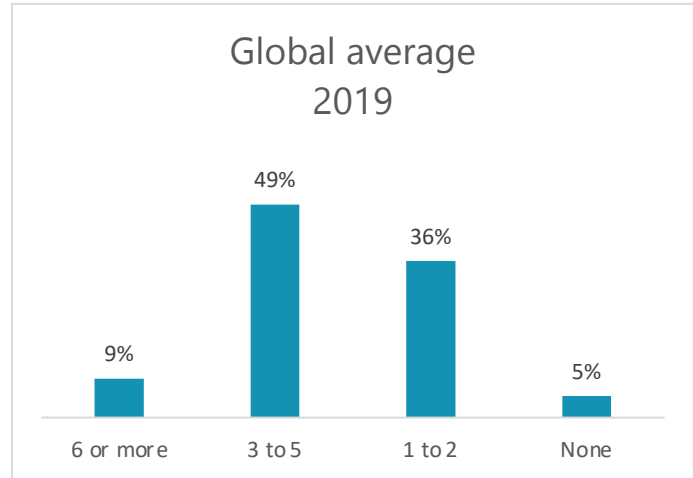


## Q15. How many different customer service channels have you used?

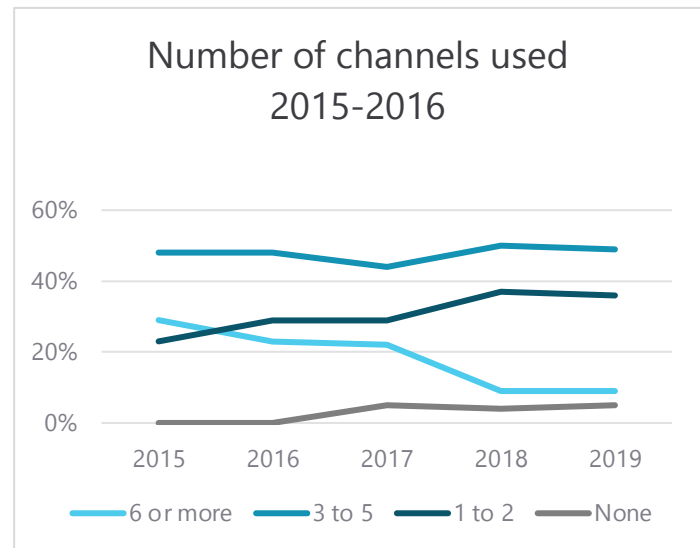
**In 2015, 29% of respondents used 6 or more channels. In 2019, this percentage dropped a whopping 69% to just 9% of respondents using 6 or more channels.** Most respondents continue to use 3 to 5 channels to contact customer service with an average of 47.8% from 2015 to 2019. The use of 1-2 channels rose from 29% in 2016 and 2017 to 37% in 2018 and 36% in 2019. The use of 1-2 channels rose from 29% in 2016 and 2017 to 37% in 2018 and 36% in 2019.

The reduction in consumers using 6 or more channels and the increase of those using 1 to 2 channels is significant as shown in the graph below. However, whether the drop in multiple channels used is due to dissatisfaction or due to quick issue resolution is unclear.

No matter how many channels are used by the customer, it is important to create a seamless customer experience across the channel landscape. Customer service should have a comprehensive view of the customer journey across channels and across time to personalize the experience and expedite issue resolution.



### Five-year global average

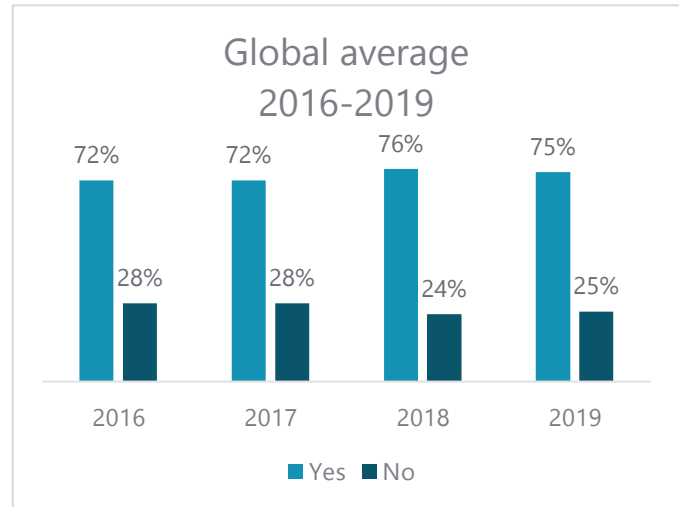




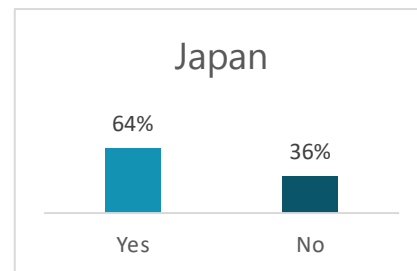
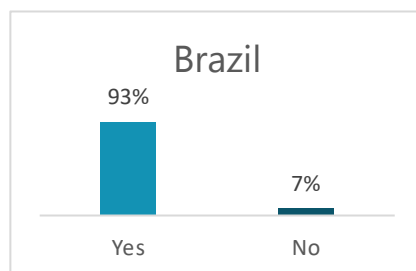
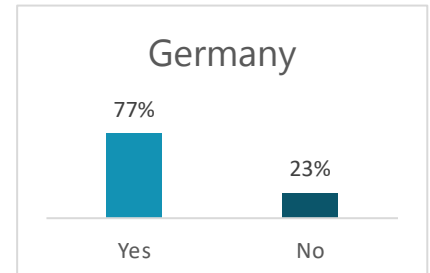
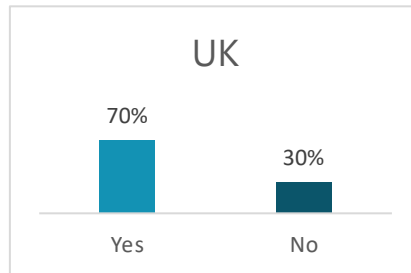
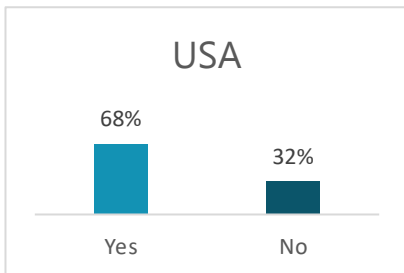
## Q16. Do you expect a representative to know your contact, product and service information/history?

**A whopping 75% of respondents expect the agent to know who they are and their purchase history.**

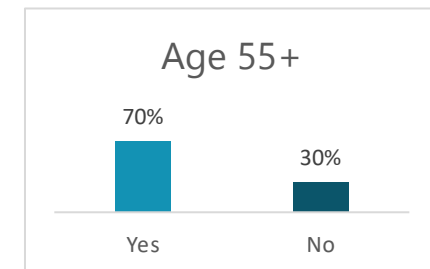
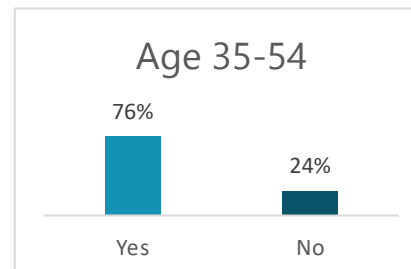
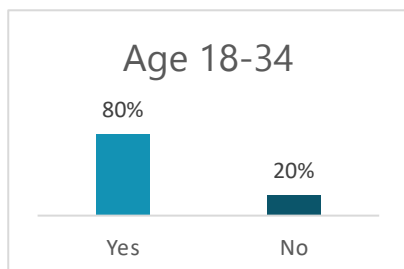
Respondents' answers to this question are consistent year over year with a four-year average of 74% so the needle is not moving. Brazil showed higher expectations with 93% of respondents expecting their profile and customer journey to be available to the agent.



### By country

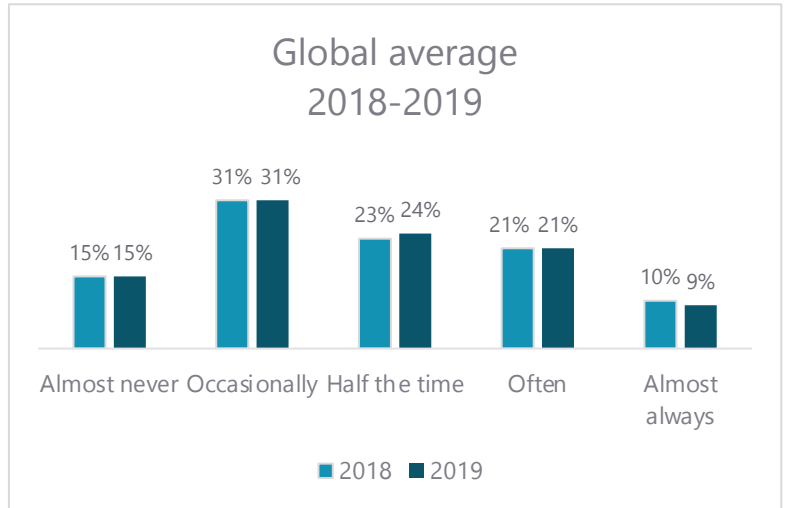


### By age group



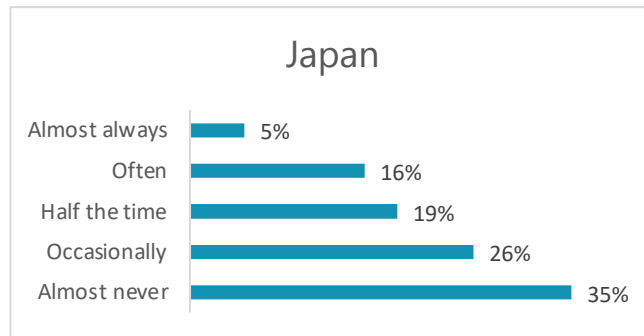
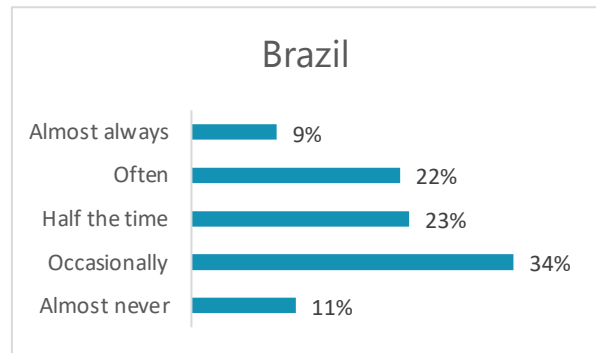
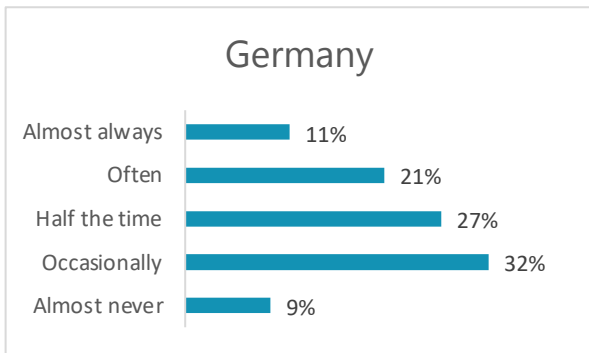
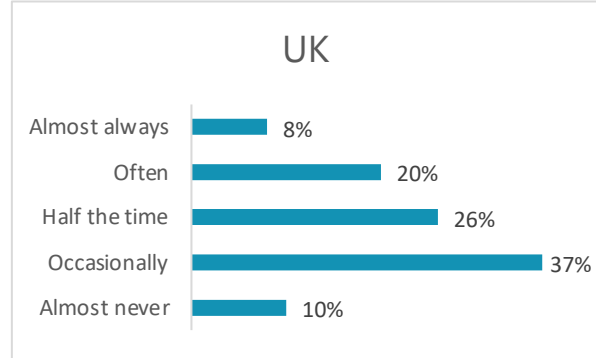
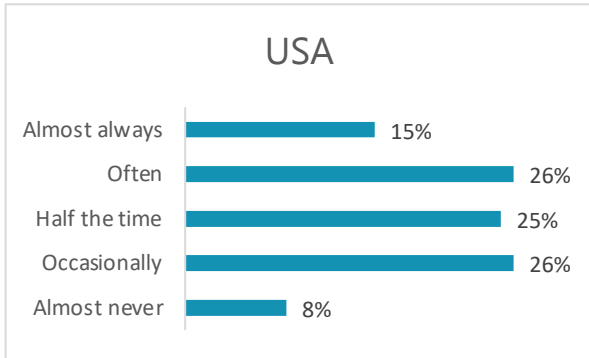
## Q17. How often does a service representative have access to your contact, product and service information/history?

The answers to this question mirrored 2018 responses. If customers expect the representative to know who they are and be able to view their complete history with the company, a significant opportunity exists for customer service organizations. By bridging this gap, 75% of all customers would have their expectations met—a significant lift to any service organization. By creating a seamless experience across channels, including access to the customer profile and journey, customer service organizations can make huge strides in creating a consistently positive customer experience and building customer loyalty.



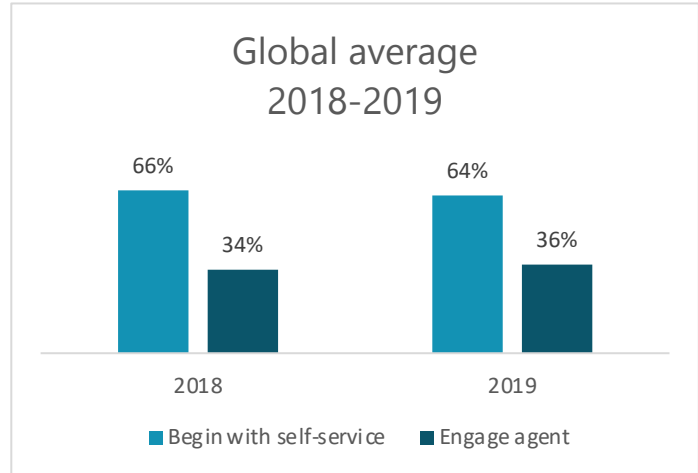
## Q17. How often does a service representative have access to your contact, product and service information/history?

2019 by country

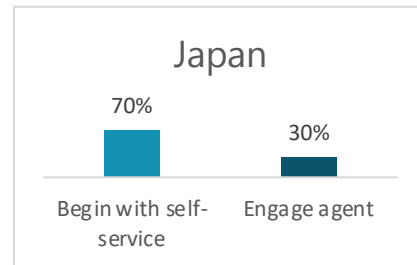
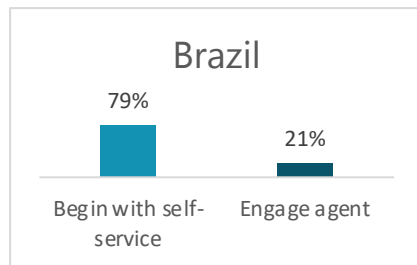
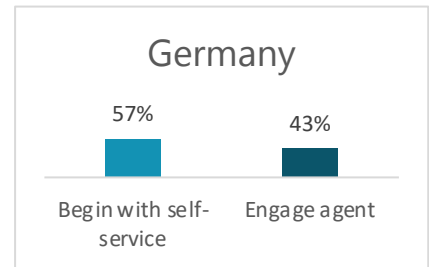
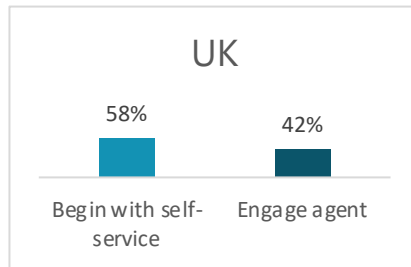
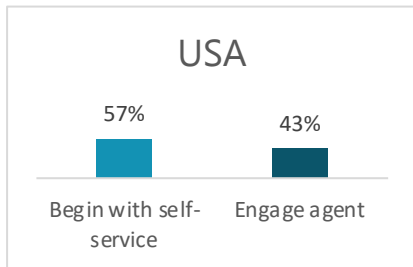


## Q18. When engaging with customer service, do you try to use self-service first or immediately engage with an agent?

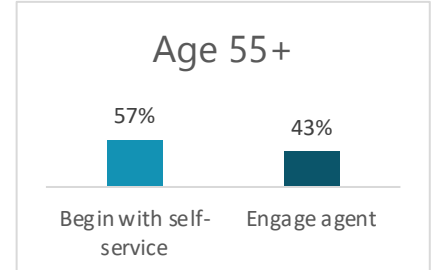
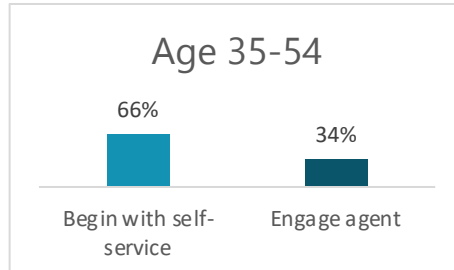
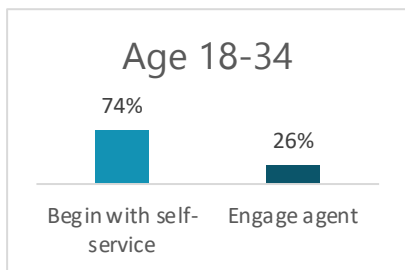
On average, **nearly two-thirds of respondents go directly to self-service first**, rather than immediately engaging an agent. Brazil and Japan engage self-service the most with 79% and 70%, respectively. The UK also led the way, choosing self-service first with 58%, while the US and Germany tied at 57%, while the US and Germany tied at 57%.



### By country



### By age group

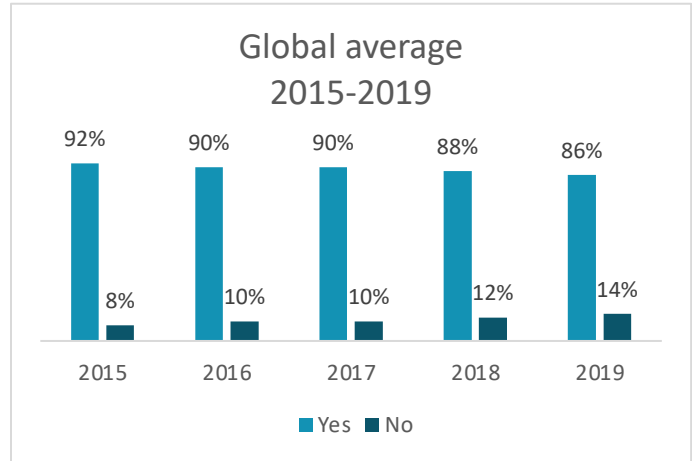


## Q19. Do you expect an organization to offer online self-service support options (e.g. FAQ or support community)?

Overwhelmingly, **86% of consumers expect online self-service options.** And, a whopping 96% of respondents from Brazil expect a self-service option.

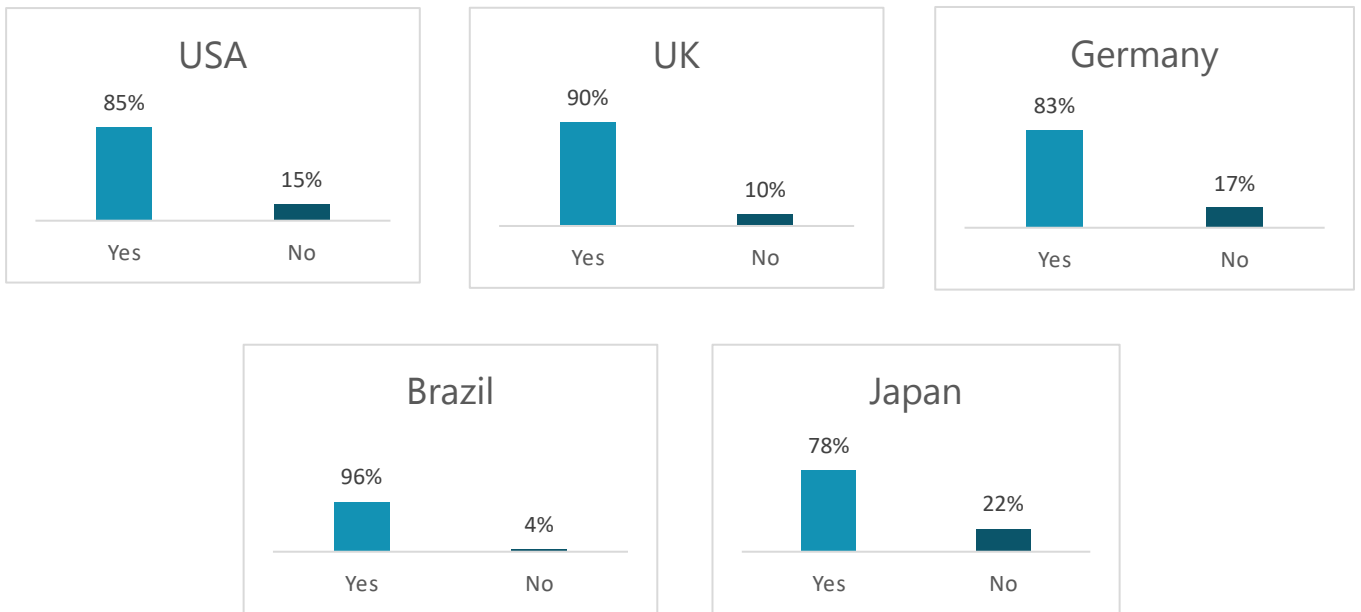
Often accessed through a portal, self-service can include a searchable knowledgebase, dropdown FAQ or a support community.

A knowledgebase is a living library, a repository of information for both the customer and the agent. A self-service knowledgebase or FAQ can be a win-win for the customer and organization to help find answers quickly. Self-service can be complimented with live chat and the use of virtual agents. However, the success or failure of a self-service knowledgebase rests heavily on the relevancy and accuracy of the topics and articles, and the ability to quickly access the information. If the information is difficult to access or is infrequently updated, the knowledgebase can quickly turn into a liability.

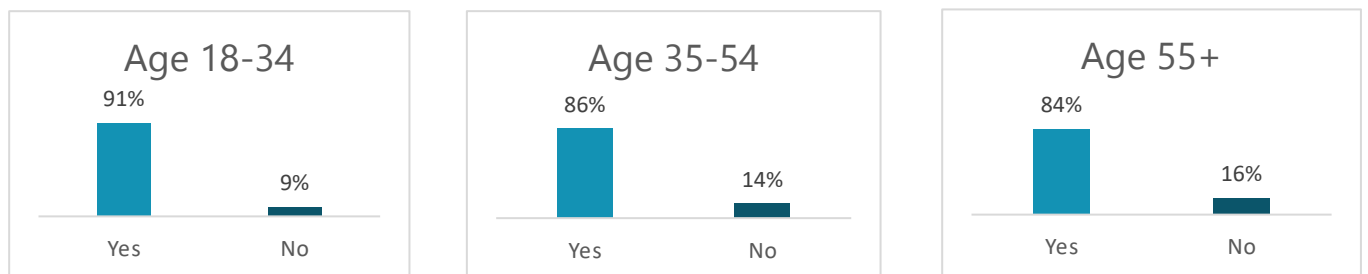


## Q19. Do you expect an organization to offer online self-service support options (e.g. FAQ or support community)?

### By country



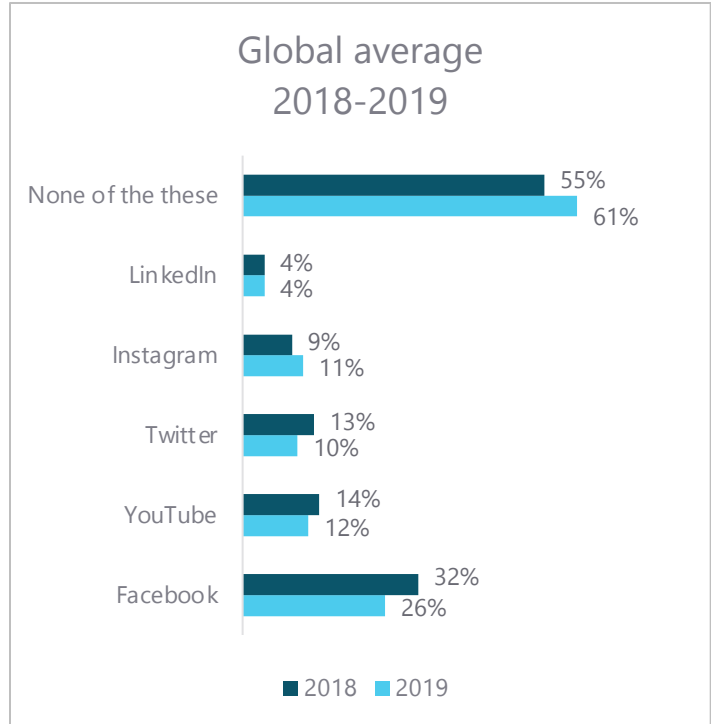
### By age group



## Q20. What social channels have you used for customer service?

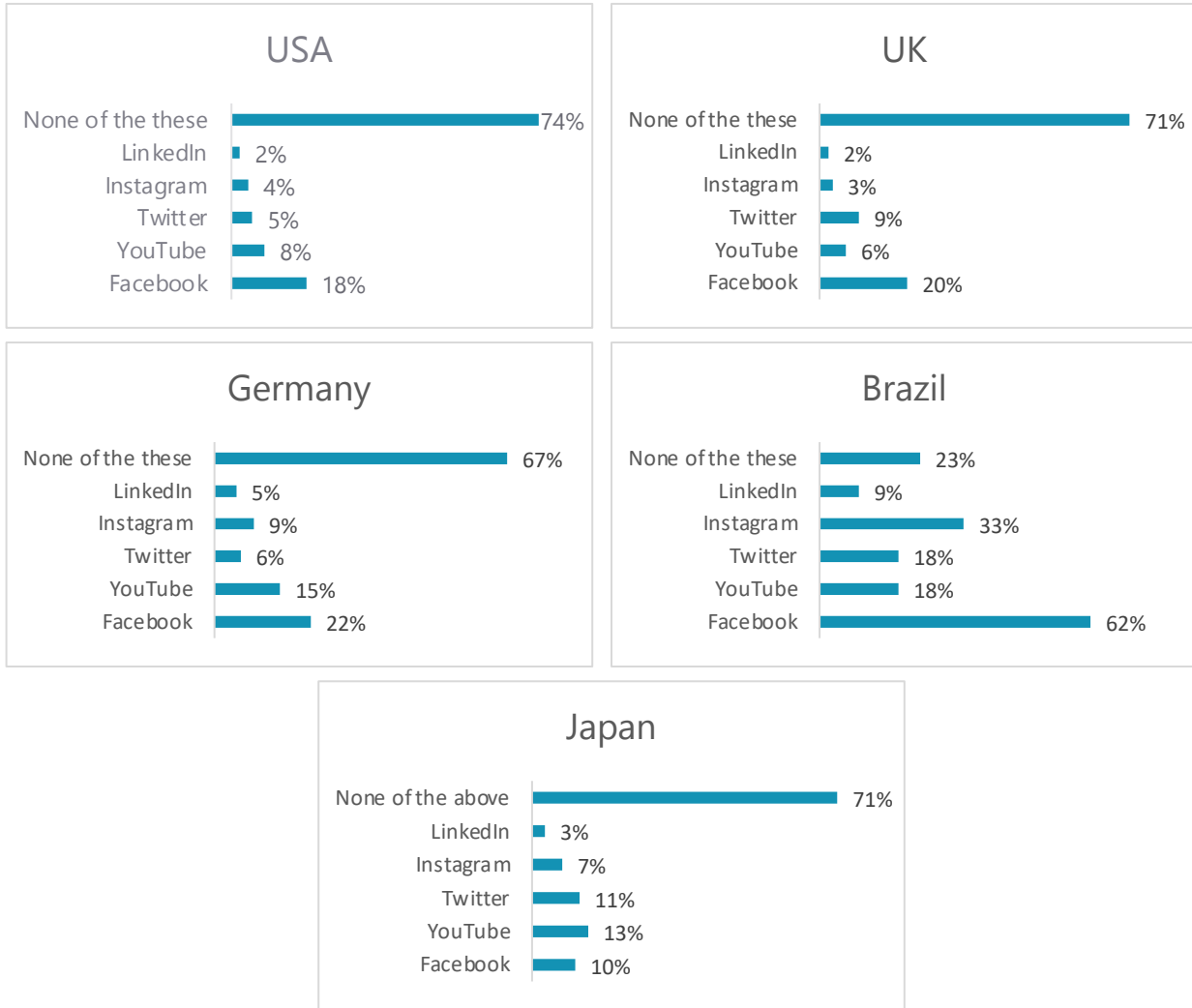
Contrary to popular belief, social media is not a favorite channel when it comes to customer service. **Those relying on Facebook fell to 26% from 32% in 2018** with every other social channel, except Instagram, falling or remaining the same as prior year. Instagram was the only social channel to gain usage for customer service with an increase of 2 points to 11% from 2018 to 2019.

No surprise that answers varied by age group with those aged 18-34 having used social media for customer service. This age group led with 66% using at least one social platform for customer service.

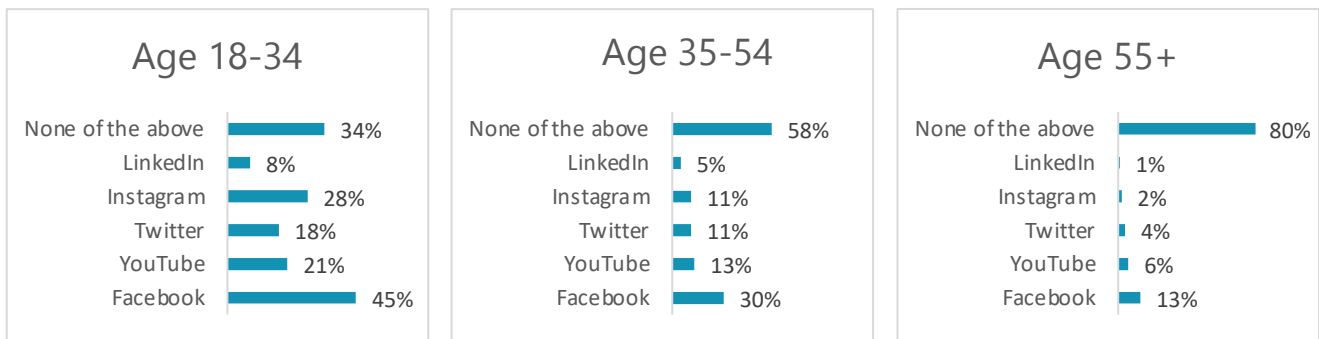


## Q20. What social channels have you used for customer service?

### By country



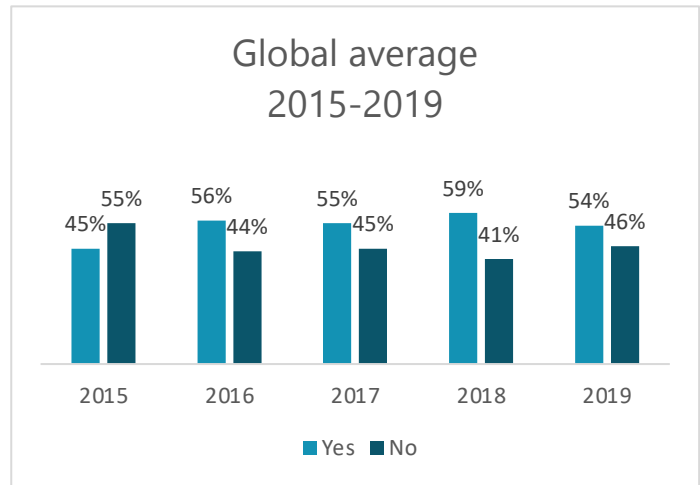
### By age group



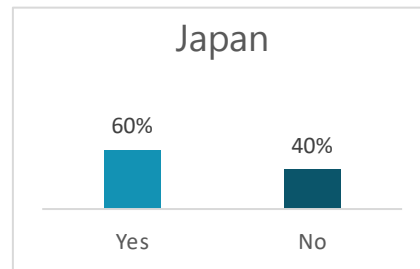
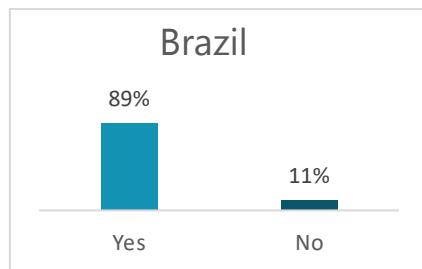
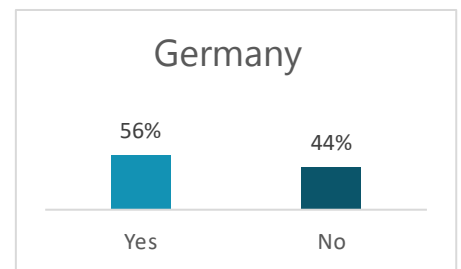
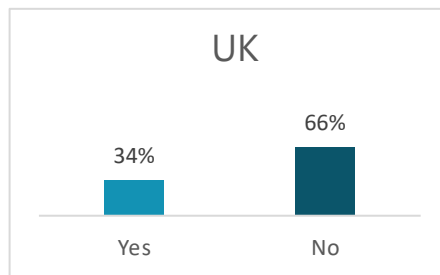
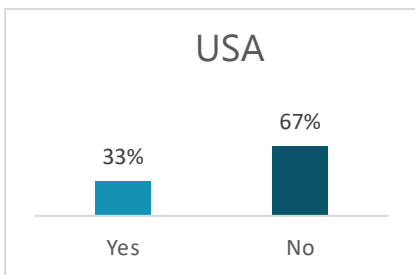


## Q21. Do you have a more favorable view of brands that respond to questions or complaints on social media?

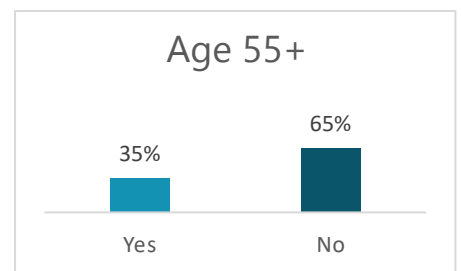
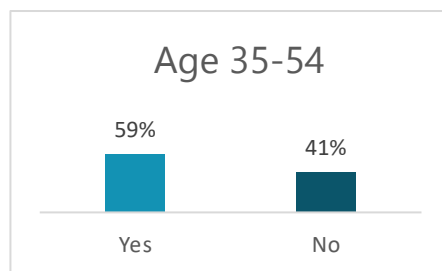
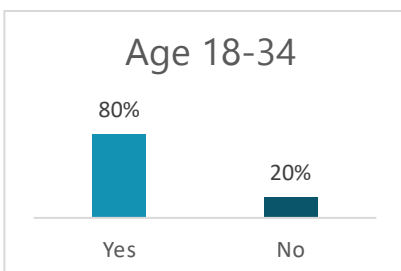
Interestingly, customers may not use social media for service issues, but **54% of respondents have a more favorable view of organizations responding via social media.** Age group 18-34 are most impressed with 80% having a favorable view and conversely, age group 55+ are least impressed with 35% having a favorable view.



### By country



### By age group



# Digital and emerging trends

Customers want their issues resolved within the first interaction with customer service and they depend on the channels they know best like voice, email, and chat.

**Survey respondents were slow to explore new channels such as video chat and co-browse.** This may be due to an unclear understanding of what the channels offer, customers having privacy issues, or a lack of companies offering such diverse channel options. However, the biggest concern may be more about the customer's comfort level with showing their face over video chat with an agent than anything else.

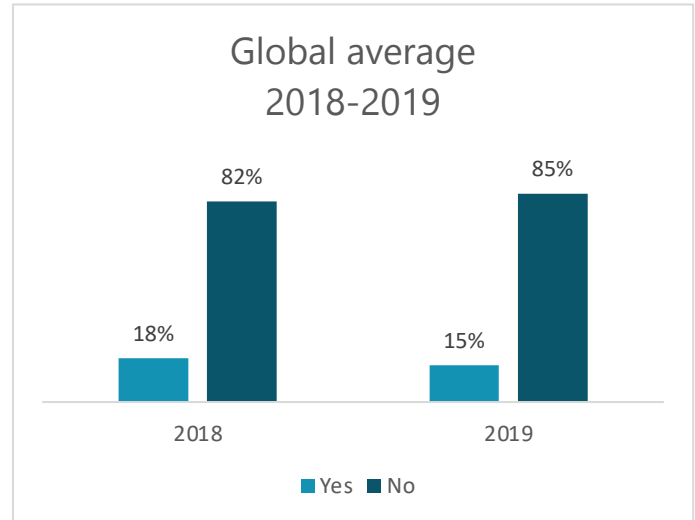
**Some studies indicate that most internet users want to maintain their anonymity online, which may account for the slow acceptance of video chat and co-browse as channels.** For co-browse, customers may not fully understand that they are sharing a screen, not the data residing on the hard drive. For these reasons, some customers may be wary of allowing an agent to co-browse their screen. However, despite the lack of use by customers, both video chat and co-browse channels consistently provide high satisfaction levels. To help increase adoption, it is a matter of educating the customer on what data they are (and are not) sharing when engaging with these channels.

**Customer acceptance of chatbot or virtual agent technology continues to grow.** However, not all chatbot technology is the same. Most bots are built by developers or data scientists, rather than by the customer service subject matter expert (SME). This may explain why only a third of respondents reported having their issue resolved by a bot while two-thirds were either transferred to an agent or simply gave up. The customer service SME needs to be actively involved in the bot building and maintenance process to create relevant bot conversations and articles that resolve routine issues quickly. **Some technologies now eliminate the need for developers, so the SME can easily build, launch and maintain better, more relevant bots.**

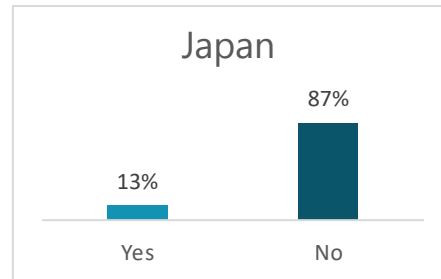
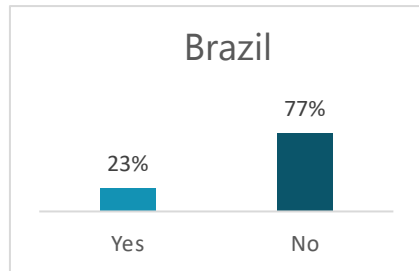
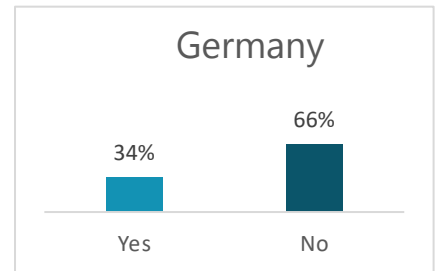
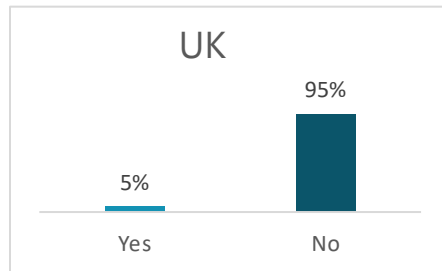
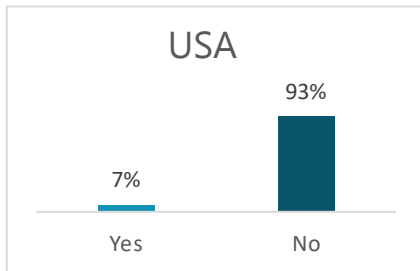
## Q22. Have you ever used video chat?

Consumers who use live chat are yet to explore video chat.

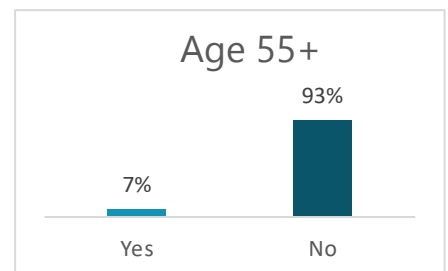
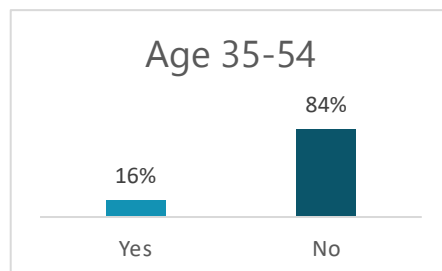
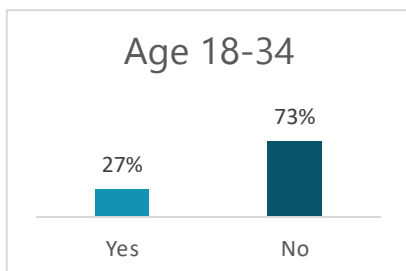
**Respondents using video chat was only 15%, a decrease from 18% in 2018.** Interestingly, Germany and Brazil were the biggest users of video chat with 34% and 23%, respectively.



### By country



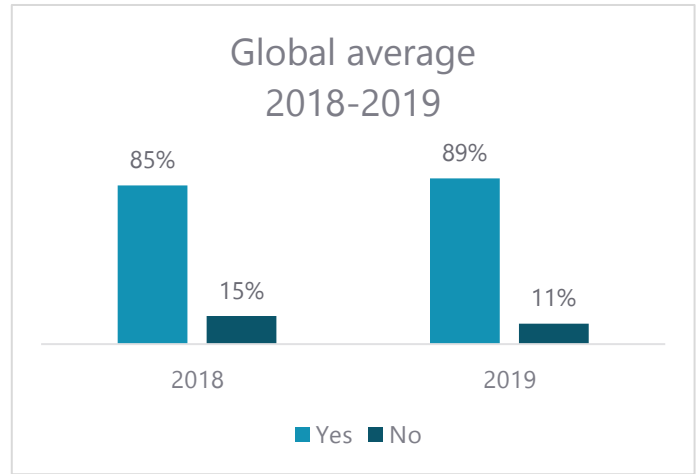
### By age group



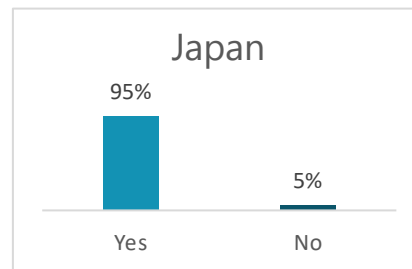
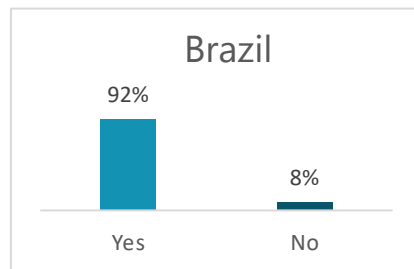
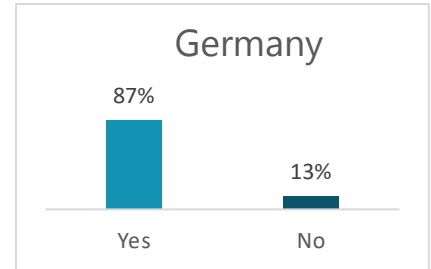
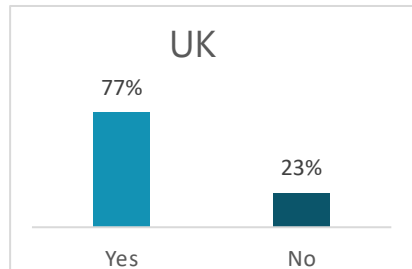
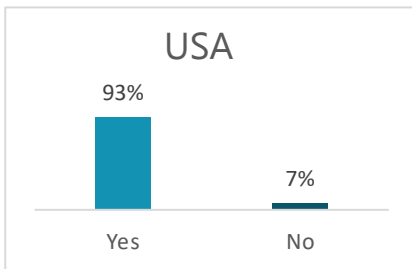
## Q23. Was video chat helpful?

**For the few that used video chat, 89% reported it was helpful in resolving their issue**—a four-point increase from 85% in 2018.

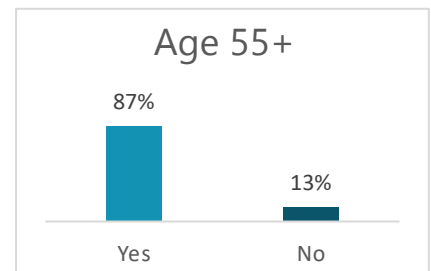
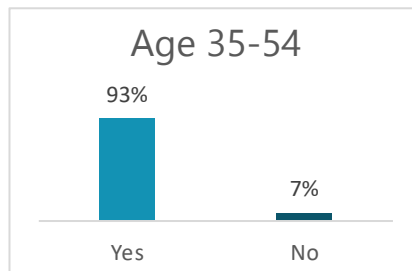
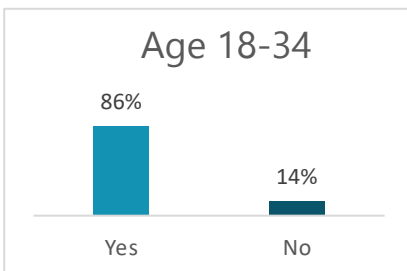
While SMS communication is all about efficiency of service, video chat provides a friendlier, more personalized experience that helps to establish trust and build strong customer relationships. As bandwidth concerns continue to diminish, Forrester expects the use of video chat to grow.



### By country



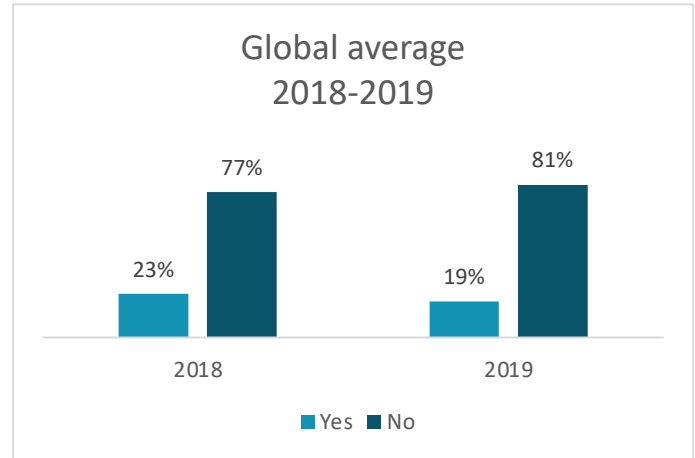
### By age group



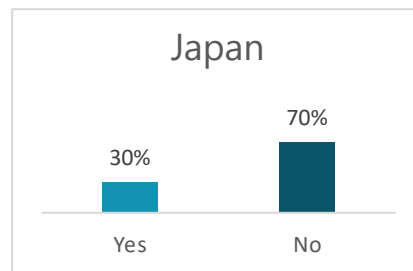
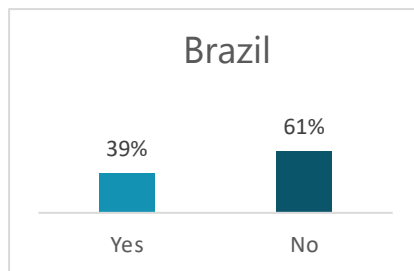
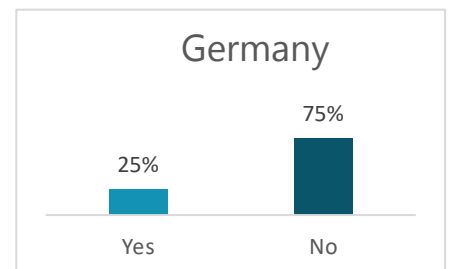
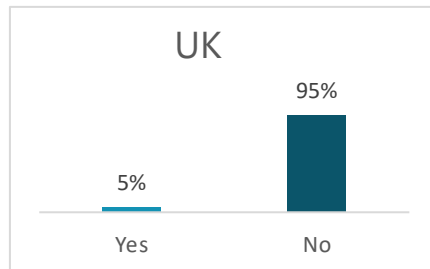
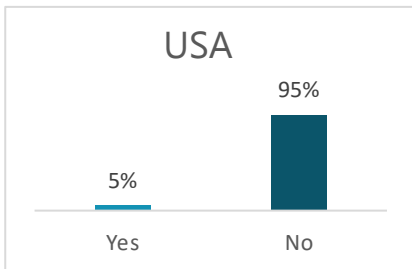
## Q24. Have you ever used co-browse?

**A global average of 81% of respondents have yet to use co-browse.**

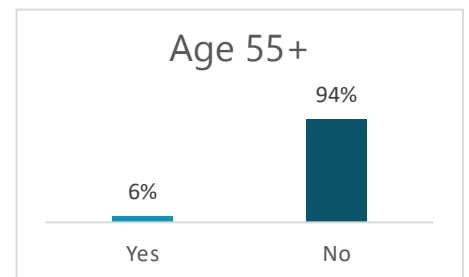
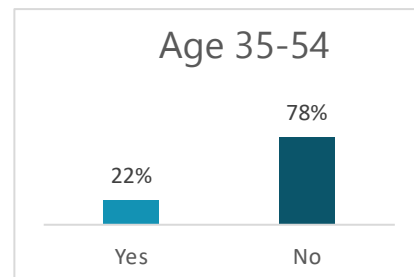
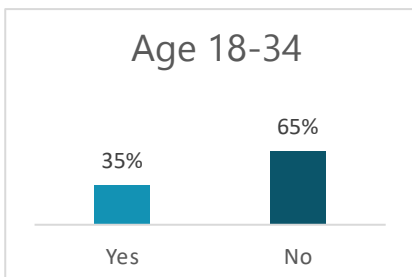
Remarkably, 95% of respondents from the US and UK have not used co-browse as a channel. Brazil led the way with 39% of respondents having tried co-browse with Japan and Germany following with 30% and 25%, respectively.



### By country



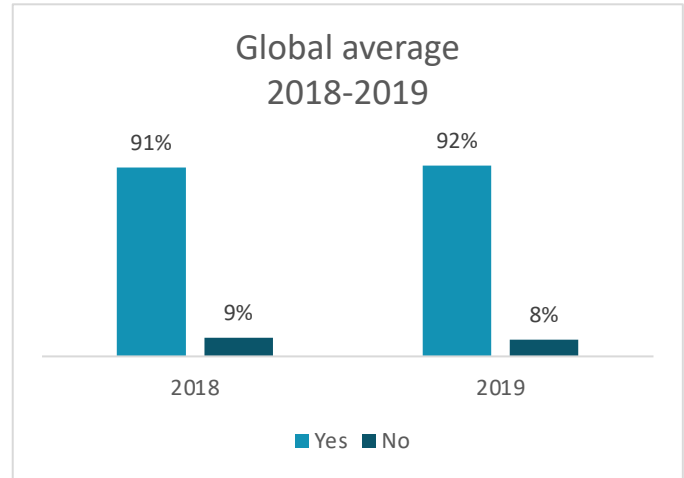
### By age group



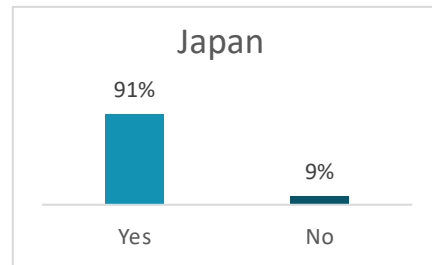
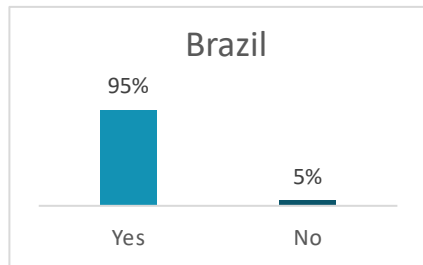
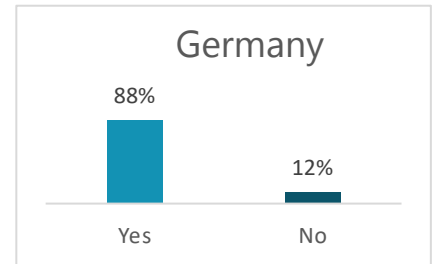
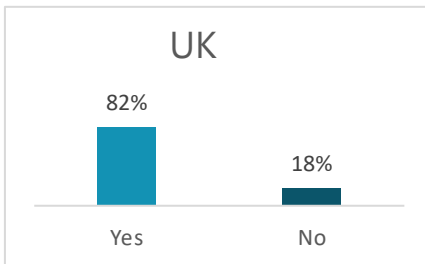
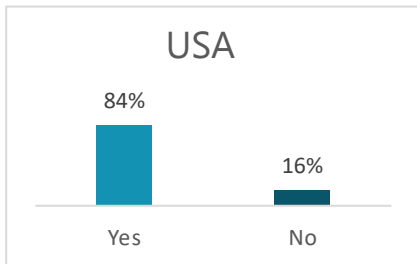
## Q25. Was co-browse useful?

**A resounding 92% found co-browse useful, up one point from the previous year.**

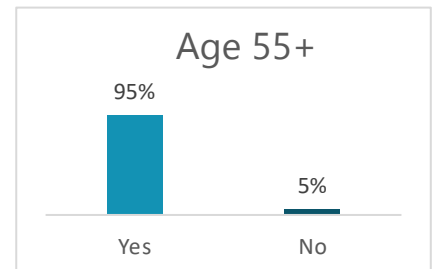
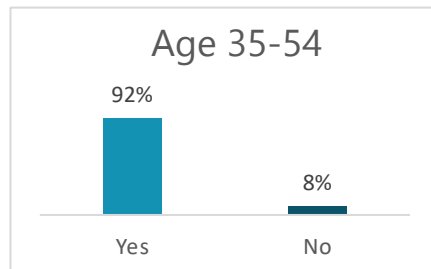
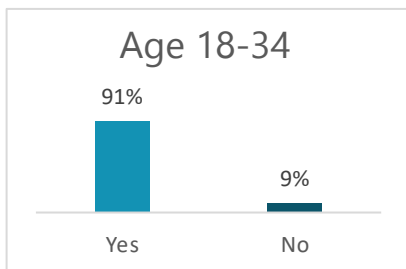
According to analysts, nearly 60% of customer interactions required intervention by a live agent. Co-browsing is a user-friendly tool that can enhance the customer experience with a more personalized, high touch interaction while simultaneously expediting a resolution.



### By country



### By age group



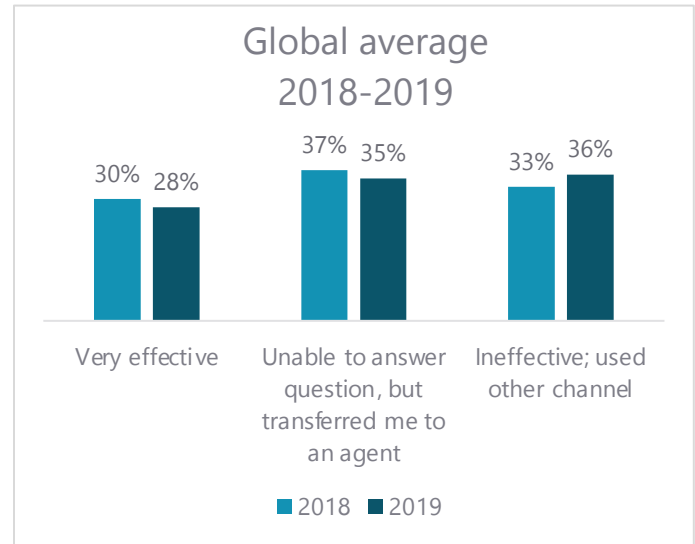
## Q26. How effective was a chatbot in resolving your issue?

### Chatbot effectiveness has fallen slightly with 28% of respondents reporting the bot resolved the issue.

A total of 35% reported that the chatbot could not resolve the issue but transferred the consumer to a live agent, and 36% reported the chatbot was completely ineffective.

Bots are built with the best intentions, but sometimes, as shared by our respondents, they become a liability rather than contributing to a positive customer experience.

Most bot technologies rely on developers and data scientists. This can create distance between the bot and those who understand the customer best. Because of costly developer time and scheduling, bot conversations grow less natural, topics are not as easy to locate and content is not refreshed as often as it should be, making the bot more ineffective as time goes on.

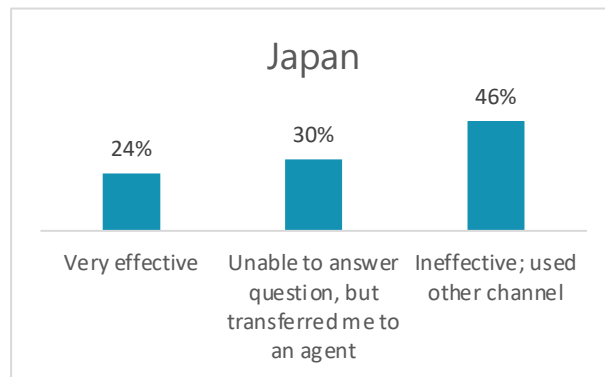
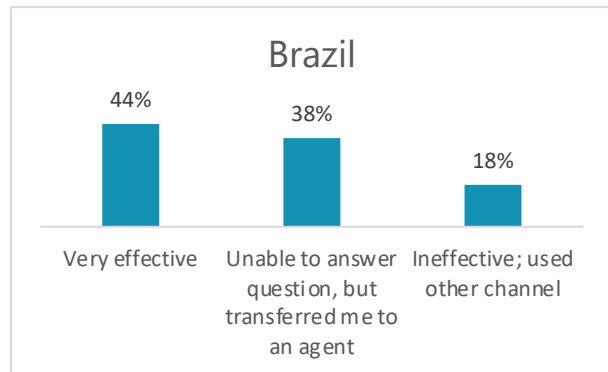
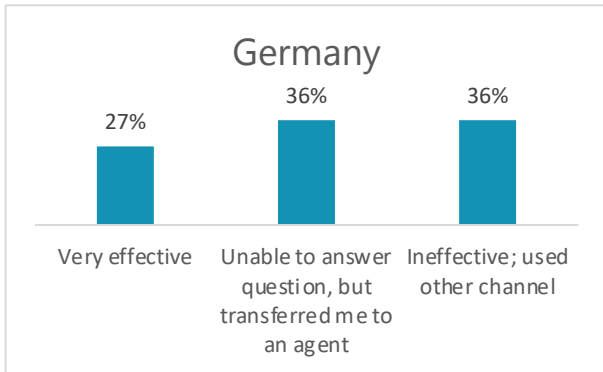
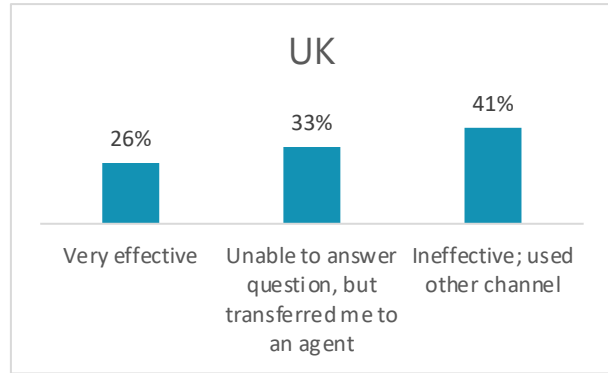
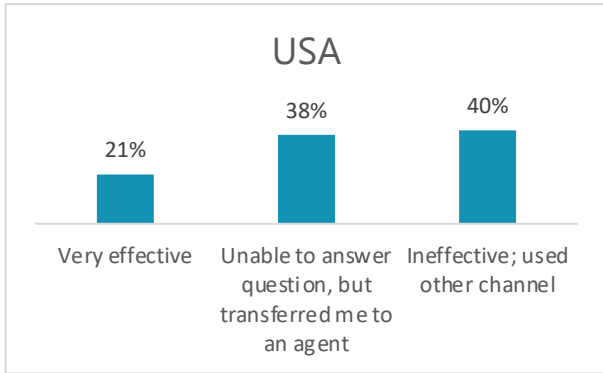


### New bot technologies can mitigate these issues by making it easier to create, launch and maintain bots.

Conversations are more natural because those closest to the customer create the scenarios, and topics can be more frequently. Customer issues are found quicker and issues are resolved faster. But, most of all, you maximize the potential impact of the bot whenever the customer has a positive experience interacting with it.

## Q26. How effective was a chatbot in resolving your issue?

By country





# What we've learned

Customers have higher expectations than ever before. So it's no surprise that analysts predict customer experience will overtake price and product as a key brand differentiator in 2020.

Customers want to be recognized as individuals, treated with respect by knowledgeable agents and have their issues resolved quickly and completely by self- or assisted service. They want a positive customer experience and to create a relationship with your brand that is based on more than just the latest transaction. And, it's clear that customer service is the epicenter of delivering a positive customer experience. Delivering a positive customer experience drives customer retention, enrichment and advocacy—all of which affect loyalty-driven revenue.

Companies are listening, measuring their customer experience and making data-driven moves to improve the experience. Constantly improving the customer experience and continually tweaking processes for better efficiency will drive revenue and lead these companies to prosperity. Conversely, those that ignore the customer experience-revenue relationship will fail to optimize company performance and sadly, will eventually fade from view.

## **What are you doing to capture the opportunities that lie ahead? How is your organization focusing on the customer experience?**

Learn how our industry-leading Microsoft Dynamics 365 Customer Service solution can help you build loyalty and deliver consistent, exceptional customer experiences. We fuse AI, machine learning, IoT, and analytics to give you the breadth and depth needed to transform your organization to capitalize on the new service economy.

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