

## **Remote work will become more normal.**

The future of customer service will not only push customers online, but it'll move service reps there, too. Rather than being confined to call centers, service reps will have more tools to work remotely. They'll field customer inquiries from the comfort of their homes, instead of having to work in an office setting. And, most service channels can already be used outside offices and call centers. Email, live chat, and social media can even be operated from a smartphone and most business phone services offer cloud-based solutions that allow you to work from home. As businesses see the potential savings of reducing office space, it'll become much more common for service reps to work remotely.

## **Personalization**

Nick Francis, Co-founder and CEO at Help Scout, says that "As customer support tools get smarter, self-service is going to become a lot more relevant, helpful, and powerful. In most companies, this means many support professionals will spend more of their time doing proactive, success-oriented activities."

"When customers do end up talking with someone, the support team will have everything they need to be helpful in a personalized way: Account information, recent in-app activity, and probably a video of the most recent session where the customer ran into trouble."

"In addition, teams will get assistance from AI-powered suggestions, making it quicker than ever to provide a great experience."

## **The rise of messaging**

If 2020 had a breakout star, messaging would be it. As customers sheltered at home in their favorite pajamas, they turned to other comforts: familiar channels like WhatsApp and text. Nearly a third of customers messed a company for the first time in 2020, and 74 percent of those say they will continue to do so.

Over the course of the pandemic:

WhatsApp tickets jumped 219%

SMS/text tickets: up 30%

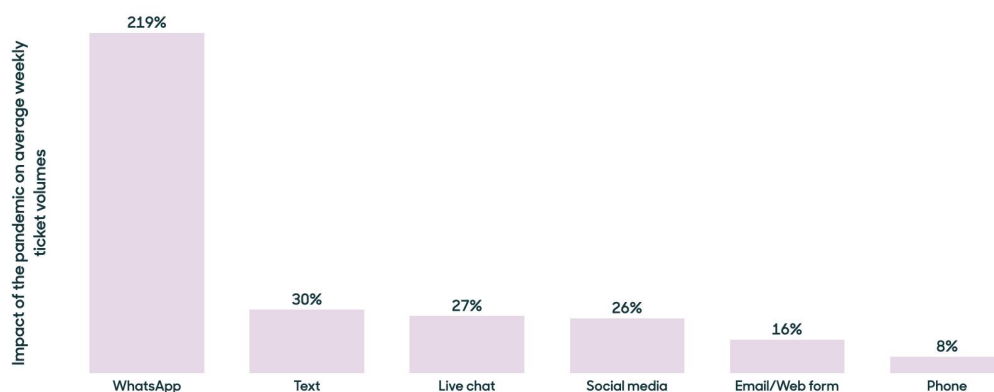
Live chat tickets: up 27%

Social media tickets: up 26%

Email/webform tickets: up 16%

Phone tickets: up 8%

### Got the message? WhatsApp sees usage rates spike



With support that's fast, personal, convenient, and secure, it's no surprise that customers and businesses are turning to messaging. The popularity of social messaging apps rose faster than any other channel in 2020, particularly among younger customers. And as a result, 53% of companies that rolled out a new channel last year added messaging.

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Not only are messaging channels easy to set up and deploy, but they also offer a better experience for agents. In fact, agents are 50% more likely to want to message

with a customer than use traditional live chat. Why? Because they can work on multiple tickets at once and conversations don't disappear when a chat window closes.

## **Omnichannel support**

Omnichannel support has been a fast-rising customer service trend since the start of the pandemic. Today's customers make inquiries and even purchases using different communication channels, from emails to social media, phone, live chat, in-app messaging, etc.

With customers switching across multiple channels for support, relying on a single-channel support system is no longer effective. Omnichannel support brings all of your customer support channels under one roof.

Such a unified support system better streamlines customer information and conversations, making it easier to track the customer journey across channels and provide on-the-go support.

Omnichannel support is a comprehensive customer service approach designed to provide seamless assistance across various channels and devices based on customer preferences. By removing barriers and offering a [unified experience](#), businesses can deliver exemplary end-to-end customer support.

Omnichannel customer engagement includes factors that many may not initially consider as part of a customer engagement strategy. An omnichannel approach may not only include phone calls, and online interactions with contact centers and chatbots, but also digital channels such as online resources, social media posts/comments, app interactions, and more. An omnichannel strategy can include any or all of these aspects. The more channels it includes, the better a brand will facilitate [customer satisfaction](#).

## **The Rise of Chatbots**

Chatbots aren't exactly new, but they are becoming more important.

Chatbots actually date way back to 1966, but of course they weren't mainstream until 2017. This is when Facebook Messenger allowed developers to use chatbots on its platform. Since then, organizations across all industries have adopted chatbots as a way of extending the reach of their customer service team.

So, what exactly is a chatbot and why do they belong in customer service?

A chatbot is a software program that replicates human conversation. The program sends and responds to text messages on a chat app.

Chatbots are becoming smarter and more sophisticated. These days, chatbots can help your customers in various ways. For example, a chatbot can:

- Answer frequently asked questions
- Generate leads
- Make recommendations
- Help with reservations
- Direct customers to a knowledge base for self-help
- Track orders
- Collect emails for a company's newsletter list
- Securely accept payments
- Filter support-related questions in order to connect the right team

Chatbots are also becoming emotionally intelligent and able to predict moods based on punctuation.

Chatbots are an economical way to expand your customer service. And thanks to the widespread adoption of Apple's virtual assistant, Siri, and Amazon's Alexa, people are more comfortable with the idea of interacting with AI.

Finally, chatbots take a lot of pressure off of your support team by not having to answer the same basic questions over and over again.