



The Five9 Guide to **Making Customer Service a More Human Experience**

Discover what today's customers really expect from your business and why providing a more human experience is so essential to customer loyalty. You'll learn how the right cloud contact center technology can help you deliver more human experiences across every aspect of the customer service journey.

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Introduction

Customers expect companies to deliver exceptional experiences no matter what is happening. In fact, customers often need *better experiences* when they are dealing with disruption or uncertainty.

Great customer experiences (CX) consist of seamless, easy interactions with fast, accurate resolutions. They are supported by intelligent cloud contact center platforms that facilitate omnichannel engagements, are enhanced with AI, and are integrated with key applications like customer relationship management (CRM) and unified communications (UC).

So, what makes *better experiences*?

Humans.

At Five9, we believe that better experiences are also more human experiences. The kind where your software empowers your people to be more connected, more empathic, and more available to focus on and relate to your customers during every interaction.

Brands who strive to deliver value-enhanced engagements in the contact center reap the rewards.

According to Gartner, after a value-enhancing service interaction (where the customer was educated about how they could get more out of the product or enhance their experience in some way) the average probability that the customer would stay when presented with an opportunity to switch was 82%, compared to 61% after a common approach with low-effort problem resolution. Also, value-enhanced experiences resulted in a 97% change of positive word of mouth and 86% likelihood of increased wallet share.¹

In this eBook, we will explore how to elevate your CX by crafting and delivering more human experiences for your customers. You'll learn how to enable your business to differentiate in a way that delivers enhanced value to your customers while improving retention and loyalty.



What Customers (Really) Want

When the global pandemic struck, businesses had to quickly shift contact centers into business continuity mode. Agents were sent home to work and every brand navigated uncertainty while doing their best to be there for their customers.

The COVID-19 experience brought out the importance of empathy and human connection between brands and customers. Messages of comfort and positive support assured consumers (and employees) that they were cared for during so much uncertainty. As conditions settled and brands and customers adjusted to new needs and new ways of doing business, a post-COVID era came into view.

How brands move forward will be based on what they learned through this experience. Brands that understand how to get close to their customers will be able to respond agilely to their needs.

But getting close is not just about having the technology to do so. It's about architecting your contact center to intentionally be more human in how you listen, engage, respond, and proactively meet customers where they are every time they connect with you.

Customers rank what constitutes a great customer service experience in the order of importance in Figure 1 below.²

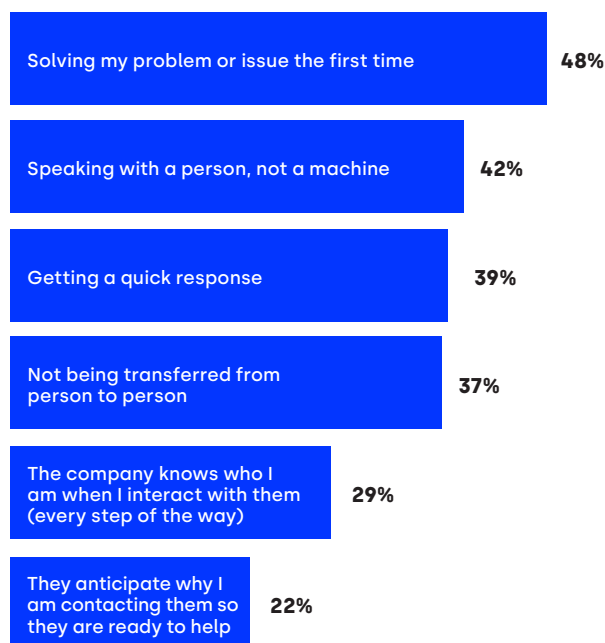


Figure 1: **What Customers Want**

Respect My Time

Customers want fast resolutions with minimal effort required. In fact, 59% of customers are unlikely to continue to do business with a company that requires a lot of effort to resolve an issue, while 38% say that without good customer service, a brand won't get their business.³

In addition to **fast first contact resolution**, customers also expect businesses to recognize them and have a record of previous interactions when they reach out for support. Specifically, 74% of customers believe it is important that a company knows their history when they contact them.⁴

Let Me Engage On My Terms

Customers also expect businesses to be able to assist them across multiple channels, but still prefer to use the phone when they need customer service.⁵

The phone may be preferred because by the time most customers contact support, they have already tried self-service options or the higher urgency of the issue led them to want to talk to a human.

What's clear is that customer expectations for exceptional CX are as high as ever, and brands that are able to differentiate on service stand to improve customer retention, loyalty, and revenue.

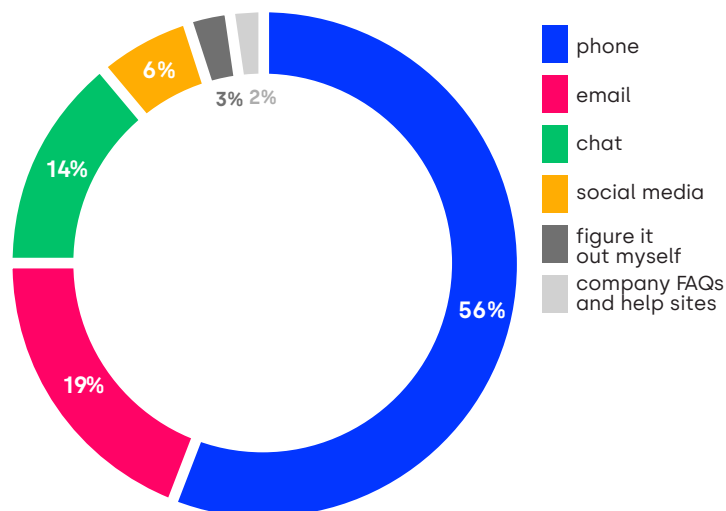


Figure 2: **Customers Still Prefer the Phone**





The Struggle to Deliver is Real

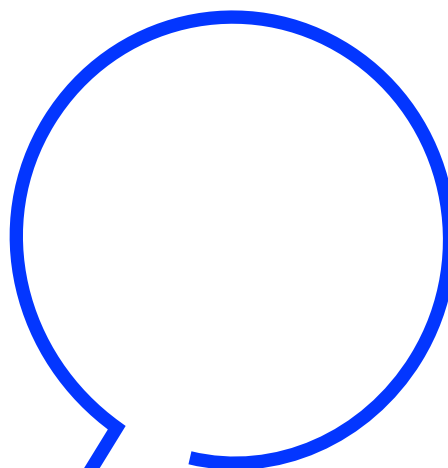
Delivering great CX is challenging and possible. There are many moving parts and you must get every part moving smoothly in sync to create a seamless, uplifting experience for customers. It needs to look and feel effortless to the customer. It involves the right people, processes, and technology.

Here's what makes it harder than it should be:

- Inability to be agile due to legacy systems and outdated on premises infrastructure
- Siloed systems that don't share data easily and keep sales, service, and marketing from connecting
- Not having all customer data available for agents when a customer calls
- Difficulty forecasting staffing needs accurately
- Inability to easily scale to manage volume peaks and valleys
- Lack of modern tools to empower agents to deliver a seamless experience
- Hiring to fill seats, rather than an agent's ability to serve the customer

The list of issues that impede great customer experience is virtually endless; the list to get customer experience right and uplevel it to feel more human (even while your contact center is supported by an increasing amount of AI, bots, and virtual agents) is relatively short.

In fact, we're going to look at two key aspects that, when prioritized, can quickly improve your contact center's ability to deliver a more human customer experience that builds loyalty with your customers.





Why CX is Really HX (Human Experience)

Customer experience is about how you make the customer feel throughout their entire journey with your brand. CX has been touted loudly for years now and there isn't a successful brand out there that doesn't prioritize it. If we go back to the roots of customer service, the name itself defines its key attributes: serving the customer.

We talk about CX so much in the contact center because that's where customers turn when a brand is failing at CX in some other area of the business. It's here that brands have the chance to redeem themselves, re-win a customer's heart, and trust that the brand will take care of them. Fail at CX here and, in addition to failing the customer, you turn them into brand enemies who will shout it from social media rooftops.

Customers protect their fellow customers. They also advocate for brands they love, admire, and respect – all *human qualities* associated with the *type of experience* they have based on how brands *relate* to them.

Great CX is really great HX – human experience. People respond to how brands make them feel. The more positive the experience is – making them feel loved, admired, and respected – the more they value the brand, spend money on the brand, and tell their friends about the brand.

But how do you drive this more human experience? There are two foundational components.

Responsiveness

Think of the person you have been in a close relationship with. This person's needs changed over time, both through their own growth and evolution and through changes that happened to them. As a loving partner, what did you do? You responded to their changing needs by being agile and responsive, rather than rigid or inflexible. You changed to meet their needs. You also looked for ways to proactively anticipate and meet their needs.

Brands and customers are in a relationship. Customers' needs change over time and your ability to be responsive and proactive to those changes is essential to keeping the relationship intact.

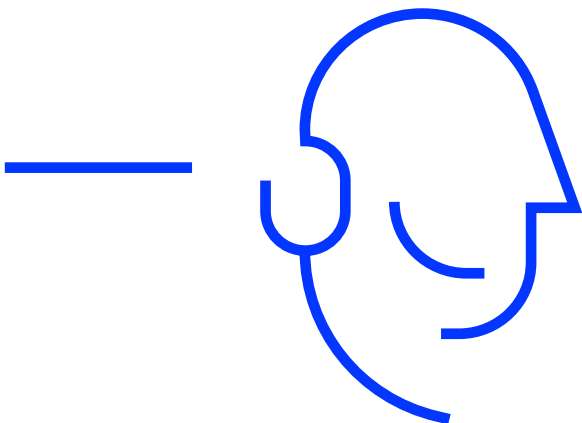
Responsiveness is the ability to adapt to shifting requirements in the market, customer needs, government mandates, global crises, and spikes in growth or lean times.

When you are a responsive brand, you are able to quickly change your business to meet new demands and show up where you can best continue to serve your customers – while still driving revenue.

Responsiveness is a human quality. The more responsive your contact center is to what's happening in the market and for customers, the better positioned you are to ensure business continuity, overcome crises, and improve loyalty.

Developing responsiveness takes more than a commitment to be present; it takes being in the cloud with technology and processes in place that enable you to be up and running even when the world is falling down. Omnichannel options, scalable staffing, easy work-from-home setups, intelligent routing, data that is effortlessly served up to agents, and AI-assisted capacities that empower human agents to focus on resolving issues the first time are all ways to develop responsiveness.

It comes from being able to trust your technology and processes so that agents can focus on *relating* to customers.



Empathy

To relate to customers, you need empathy.

Empathy is part of emotional intelligence, the ability to discern and understand other people's emotions and feel their perspective. It's being able to imagine yourself in someone else's situation and understand why they feel the way they do.

A more human contact center experience is rooted in empathy for the customer. It takes what could be a generic, forgettable, or potentially negative interaction and turns it into one that is positive, memorable, and loyalty-building. It's about listening to and understanding customers, making a connection that goes beyond simply answering questions or solving problems, communicating with compassion, and making the interaction so easy and convenient that customers instantly feel positive about your brand.

It is also what makes us human.

To create more empathy, you need to hire people who are naturally empathic, train them to communicate empathetically, and intentionally value empathy across the customer service experience. It needs to be a deciding factor in every decision – including your technology.

Before purchasing a cloud contact center solution, you need to determine whether the software, application, or process give agents the ability to be more empathic. Does it get the technology out of the way so they can focus on truly listening and engaging with the customer? Does it provide them with all the data they need in the moment to meet that customer right where they are?

Brands that truly build empathy into their customer service values choose technology that does this. They stand out.



How to Deliver a More Human Experience

With responsiveness and empathy as key anchors of a more human experience strategy, let's take a closer look at seven types of experiences customers value most when they interact with your business—and the contact center technology you need to meet their expectations.

Know Me

Customers expect you to know them and their history with your brand when they contact you. They don't want to have to identify themselves and repeat when and why they've contacted you in the past. Just as you recognize your friends and remember your history with them, recognizing your customers and their previous interactions makes them feel known and valued.

Your contact center should include [pre-built CRM integrations](#) and screen pops to enable this. This will empower agents to spend more time listening and being empathic rather than putting the customer on hold while they hunt down information. AI-driven "agent assist" prompts and suggestions for next best actions, as well scripting, can help agents focus on engaging the customer while making them feel known.

Meet Me

Contact centers that offer eight or more channels see a 92% improved customer satisfaction rate, while those with between one and four channels see a 50% improvement.⁶ Whether it's via voice, email, SMS/text, chat, video, or social messaging apps, customers want you to meet them where they are, on the channels of their choice.

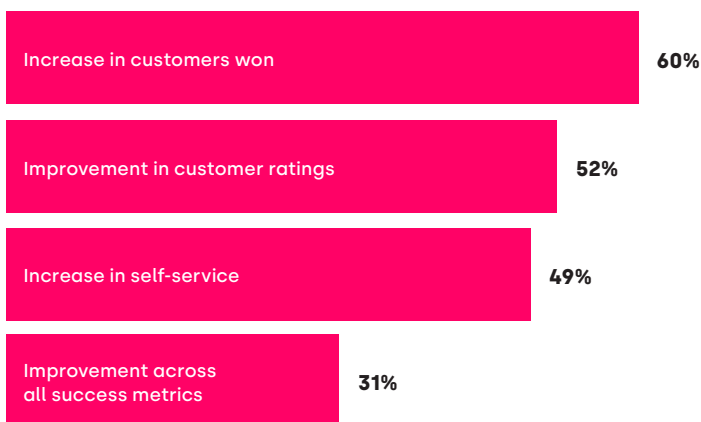


Figure 3: **Omnichannel Results**

Contact centers that go [omnichannel](#) see significant results.⁷

While phone continues to prevail, customers clearly want options to be able to choose the best way for them to connect.

Empower Me

Your contact center should enable omnichannel as well as deliver [self-service options through visual IVRs](#) and knowledge centers. Many customers prefer to find answers on their own without having to speak to an agent. When you meet this need, you deliver a more human experience by respecting their time and preferences as individuals. Empowering customers with self-service options also increases call deflection and lowers your contact center costs.

No matter which channel a customer chooses, they should find you there with open arms.

Remember Me

Customers expect your channels to be connected and to easily leave off an interaction and pick up on a different channel, without having the experience disrupted or having to repeat themselves. This goes back to their desire that you know them.

Your contact center should easily connect across the entire [omnichannel CX journey](#) and enable a smooth switch from channel to channel.

Respect Me

Customers want to feel that you respect their time. The best way to do this is to save them time. This means [not keeping customers on hold](#) and resolving issues the first time. Your cloud contact center should offer a comprehensive workforce management system that will automatically and accurately forecast call volumes, so you have the right number of agents available to handle calls. It should also leverage flexible agent scheduling to address volume spikes.

Resolving issues the first time is possible with [intelligent omnichannel routing](#) that gets calls to the right agents at the right time. [Pre-built UC integrations](#) improve first contact resolution by giving agents the ability to easily access subject matter experts who are using the UC capabilities. Agents can connect to them during the customer engagement and bring them directly into the conversation if needed.

The bottom line? Solving an issue the first time respects customers.

Support Me

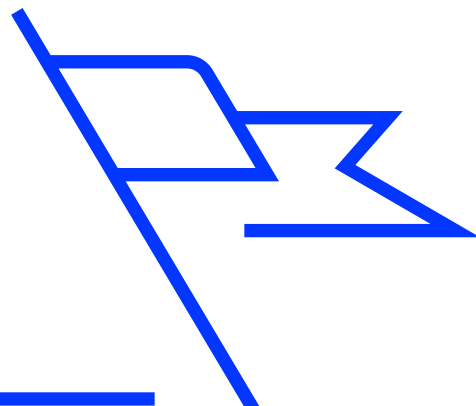
Delivering a more human experience involves anticipating customer needs ahead of time. Proactively sending appointment reminders, follow-ups, shipment notifications, product availability, back-order/out of stock updates, and notifications of service interruptions are all examples of ways to proactively communicate with customers before they have to contact you. Workflow automation tools, like [Five9 Proactive Notification](#), enable this.

The more you can communicate proactively and even resolve a potential issue before it becomes one, the more customers feel supported.

Assure Me

Customers need assurance that you will be there when they need you. They also want to know that you are providing a [secure and reliable experience](#), with data privacy and cybersecurity firmly in place, as well as what you are doing to keep them safe.

Your contact center should meet the latest security certifications and give you the confidence you need to assure customers you are keeping their data safe.





Businesses Providing More Human Experiences in the Cloud

Businesses delivering more human experiences see results. The following companies are leading the way in several key aspects of the human experience.



Resolving Issues the First Time

PAR Technology

PAR Technology is a leading provider of point-of-sale (POS) hardware and software to restaurants. PAR's integration ecosystem enables restaurants to improve their operational efficiency by combining cloud-based POS software with the world's leading restaurant technology platforms. When restaurants have an issue or question about using the technology, PAR's contact center agents direct them to experts across the organization and located around the globe. This process proved frustrating for agents and customers as PAR's unified communications and contact center systems were not integrated.

When PAR moved to the cloud, the company chose Zoom for its unified communications as a service (UCaaS) system and Five9 for its contact center as a service (CCaaS) provider because of their integrated solution. The Five9 and Zoom integration, along with PAR's CRM, gave agents the ability to identify customers and seamlessly connect them to experts on first contact, which ultimately resulted in higher first contact resolution rates. Working with an integrated platform also enabled agents to work from anywhere and reduced PAR's IT costs.

[Read the PAR Technology case study](#) and [watch the video](#) to get the whole story of how the Five9 Intelligent Cloud Contact Center enabled the organization to improve first contact resolution and deliver extraordinary customer experiences.

[Read Case Study →](#)

[Watch Video →](#)

"The integration with Five9 and Zoom Phone has helped our agents respond to our customers' needs much quicker."

Bernie Salvaggio, IT Director,
PAR Technology



Reducing Customer Wait Times

Gonzaba Medical Group

As one of the largest premier medical practices in South Texas, Gonzaba Medical Group (GMG) believes that everyone deserves a medical care experience where they are treated like family, or "como familia." In pursuing this goal, GMG discovered that its current contact center infrastructure was not set up to support the service that made patients feel like family.

GMG had several issues with its on premises contact center software solution. In addition to those challenges, it also experienced limitations with trunk space and number of lines. GMG was also missing calls, irritating patients, and having issues with reporting and monitoring.

By engaging with Five9, GMG optimized its IVR, gained insight into agent activities, instituted more scalable, flexible scheduling, and leveraged pre-built Salesforce integrations. GMG lowered patient wait time from 10 minutes to 1 minute or less, a 900% reduction. Now 70% of calls are answered within 60 seconds, call abandonment rate has gone down by 4%, and GMG has improved patient appointment confirmation rates by 60%.

Learn more about the improved patient care GMG delivers with Five9 in an [on-demand webinar](#) and [watch the video](#) to see the value Five9 brings to the GMG community.

"We would absolutely not be able to deliver the type of service that we're providing to our patients without the help of Five9."

Darryl Flores, Director of Customer Experience, **Gonzaba Medical Group**

[Watch Webinar →](#)

[Watch Video →](#)



Meeting Students on Their Channel of Choice

Regent University

Regent University is a faith-based institution for higher education located in Virginia Beach. The university has on-campus and online programs available worldwide and 70% of its students attend online. Regent's contact center consists of admissions, financial aid, and student advisory services and handles mostly outbound calls with students.

The university was using an on premises solution that had no dialer functionality and no integration with Microsoft Dynamics, which reduced productivity. It had poor omnichannel delivery and was unable to meet large call volumes. Regent wanted to improve its communications channels and scale to meet growth goals.

By working with Five9, Regent was able to move to the cloud with ease and scale on demand, integrate with multiple systems to provide more personalized service for students, enable an omnichannel experience so students could engage on their channel of choice, and double call volume without adding agents.

[Read the case study](#) and [watch the video](#) to learn how Regent University provides a more human experience with Five9.

[Read Case Study →](#)

[Watch Video →](#)

"Omnichannel is very important to us because it allows our students to contact us on whichever channel they choose. They can switch between channels and it all goes to the same team of agents."

Jonathan Harrell, Assistant Vice President of IT, **Regent University**



Five9 is Designed to Be More Human

Now more than ever, when customers engage with brands, they expect extraordinary customer service that makes them feel known, respected, and valued. You can set your brand apart by developing a strategy for responsiveness and empathy, as well as choosing cloud contact center technology that can support a more human customer service experience.

Your customers will notice and value you for it, and they will reward you with their loyalty.

The Five9 Intelligent Cloud Contact Center is purposely designed to support and deliver a more human experience across every aspect of the customer service journey. Our technology supports your customers and agents with a comprehensive platform that integrates with your business-critical systems and equips you to be agile and empathetic.

Want to see how easy we make it?

Call **1-800-553-8159** to speak with a human sales representative or [view a demo](#) of the Five9 Intelligent Cloud Contact Center today. Visit www.five9.com for more information.

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About Five9

Five9 is an industry-leading provider of cloud contact center solutions, bringing the power of cloud innovation to more than 2,000 customers worldwide and facilitating more than six billion call minutes annually. The Five9 Intelligent Cloud Contact Center provides digital engagement, analytics, workflow automation, workforce optimization, and practical AI to create more human customer experiences, to engage and empower agents, and deliver tangible business results. Designed to be reliable, secure, compliant, and scalable, the Five9 platform helps contact centers increase productivity, be agile, boost revenue, and create customer trust and loyalty.

For more information visit www.five9.com or call **1-800-553-8159**.

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