Digital Communication Dominates Customer Engagement
Overview

Do brands understand how, when and why consumers prefer to use digital communication and social platforms to connect with them? Do they understand what their consumers’ expectations are regarding communicating via digital channels? By understanding what consumers want and how they want to engage, brands can deepen their customer relationship, build brand advocates and reach new audiences.

In July of 2016, STARTEK surveyed an audience of over 1,000 consumers to better understand their preferences of utilizing mobile devices, digital communication mediums and social media channels to interact with brands and discovered that 77 percent of consumers say it’s easy to communicate digitally with a brand. Furthermore, 80 percent of consumers said they received good customer service using social media to communicate with a brand.

This new survey report explores these behavioral issues and evolving expectations so that brands can create the right strategy to deliver the best customer engagement experience.

We hope the insights shared in this report help marketing professionals develop a strategic approach to digital customer engagement by delivering a positive brand experience across online channels and social platforms. Tweet us your thoughts and feedback at @STARTEKGlobal.

Best regards,

Courtney Simpson

Courtney Simpson, Director of Marketing
Consumer Communication Goes Digital

77% of consumers say it's easy for them to communicate with a company digitally.

Four out of five consumers use social media, email, or chat to communicate with a brand.

Why Do Consumers Contact A Company?

81% say to fix a problem or ask a question.

Millennials Use Cell Phones, Baby Boomers Use Landlines

EIGHT OUT OF TEN CONSUMERS USE A DIGITAL DEVICE TO CONTACT A COMPANY

Millennials are 137% more likely than baby boomers to use a cell phone to contact a company.

30% use a laptop, tablet, or desktop to contact a company.

Only 1% use a wearable device to contact a company.

WHAT WE LEARNED:
Consumers want to communicate with brands, what has changed is how they prefer to communicate. The days of handwritten letters and calling from a landline have evolved to writing an email and using social media channels to connect with a brand, mostly driven by millennials. In fact, our survey reveals that only 10% of consumers always use a phone to contact a company.

It's important to note the younger generation are considered “connected consumers” and are always on, which means brands must take a digital communication approach to customer engagement to remain accessible and provide value for new and existing customers.
80% of consumers receive good customer service using social media.

**Best Social Media For Customer Service**

- Facebook: 38%
- Google+: 30%
- LinkedIn: 9%
- Twitter: 8%
- Pinterest: 5%
- WhatsApp: 5%
- Instagram: 3%
- SnapChat: 2%

**Men Tweet, Women Pin**

- Men are 150% more likely than women to say Twitter offers good customer service.
- Women are 134% more likely than men to say Pinterest offers good customer service.

**Best Industries for Connecting Customers & Companies on Social Media**

- Retailers: 52%
- Cell phone providers: 13%
- Cable, phone, internet companies: 13%
- Banks: 11%
- Health care providers: 7%
- Gas, electric, utility companies: 4%

**Top Reasons to Contact a Company via Social Media**

- 80% of consumers receive good customer service using social media.
- 53% of millennials say to find deals and promotions.
WHAT WE LEARNED:

New social media platforms will continue to enter the market, and it’s imperative to know which platforms your customers prefer to engage on. Our survey shows that Facebook provides the best customer service option for consumers. Marketers should take note of the popular social channels, learn what their consumers want on the channel - whether they’re looking for a deal or want to making a purchase - build a brand presence and engage with consumers beyond simply posting content.

Brands Connecting with Consumers via Social Media Channels

Women are 23% more likely than men to use social media for deals and promotions.

51% want to learn more about a company or product.
30% ask for help.
23% complain.

One in three praise and/or recommend a company or product.

OVER ONE-THIRD OF BABY BOOMERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO MAKE A PURCHASE

59% say it’s helpful to post a question on a company’s social media channel and receive a response from other followers/customers; 68% of millennials agree.

OVER HALF OF BABY BOOMERS DON’T FIND IT HELPFUL WHEN FOLLOWERS/CUSTOMERS ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS ON A COMPANY’S SOCIAL CHANNEL
Could Virtual Reality be the Next Big Thing for Customer Engagement?

One in three consumers are excited to communicate with a company via virtual reality

BABY BOOMERS

- Baby boomers are 2x more skeptical than millennials about using virtual reality
- Nearly a quarter of baby boomers don’t know what virtual reality is

WHAT WE LEARNED:
Will virtual reality be the next customer engagement tool? A third of today’s consumers are excited to use it to connect with a company, but are companies ready to embrace it? Let’s look at the rise of social media as an example. Ten years ago, social media like Facebook and Twitter were focused on sharing updates and following friends. Now social media is engrained in everyday life, making it a critical component for brands to connect with their consumers. As virtual reality is becoming more mainstream, will it have the same impact as social media?
CONCLUSION:
Today’s consumers hold the power, which can be challenging for brands to stand out in a crowded landscape. In order for brands to successfully engage with their consumers, they need to understand what they want and how they want to communicate.

As technology becomes second nature for consumers, their behavior has evolved from a traditional methods such as in-person or calling from a landline to a digital one that includes email, chat and social media channels. From our survey, we learned that the majority of consumers (80%) communicate with brands digitally, lead by the millennials. Let that sink in for a second and think about your company’s customer engagement strategy - does it have a strong focus on digital customer engagement?

It’s important to understand how your consumers want to engage with your brand and develop a strategy that will deepen their customer relationship, build brand advocates and reach new audiences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- With technology a part of consumers’ everyday life, brands must evolve and develop a digital customer engagement strategy to successfully reach their consumers - especially millennials.
- Social networks offer a unique opportunity for authentically engaging with your consumers, it is key to align your customer engagement strategy with different channels so audiences can foster meaningful interactions and have a positive brand experience.
- Millennials are excited to communicate with brands via virtual reality, marketing professionals must take note of emerging customer engagement channels and prepare to be a part of the conversation to strengthen customer relationships.

METHODOLOGY
STARTEK surveyed over 1,000 consumers in July 2016 through an online survey. Responses were collected from male and female respondents age 18+ in the United States. Responses were random, voluntary and completely anonymous.