Survey Results: Customer Expectations and Experiences with Online Shopping

Online shopping has changed the game for consumers everywhere. But sidestepping the in-person experience creates a new obstacle for retailers. How can businesses ensure a great shopping experience if they can't interact with customers in person?
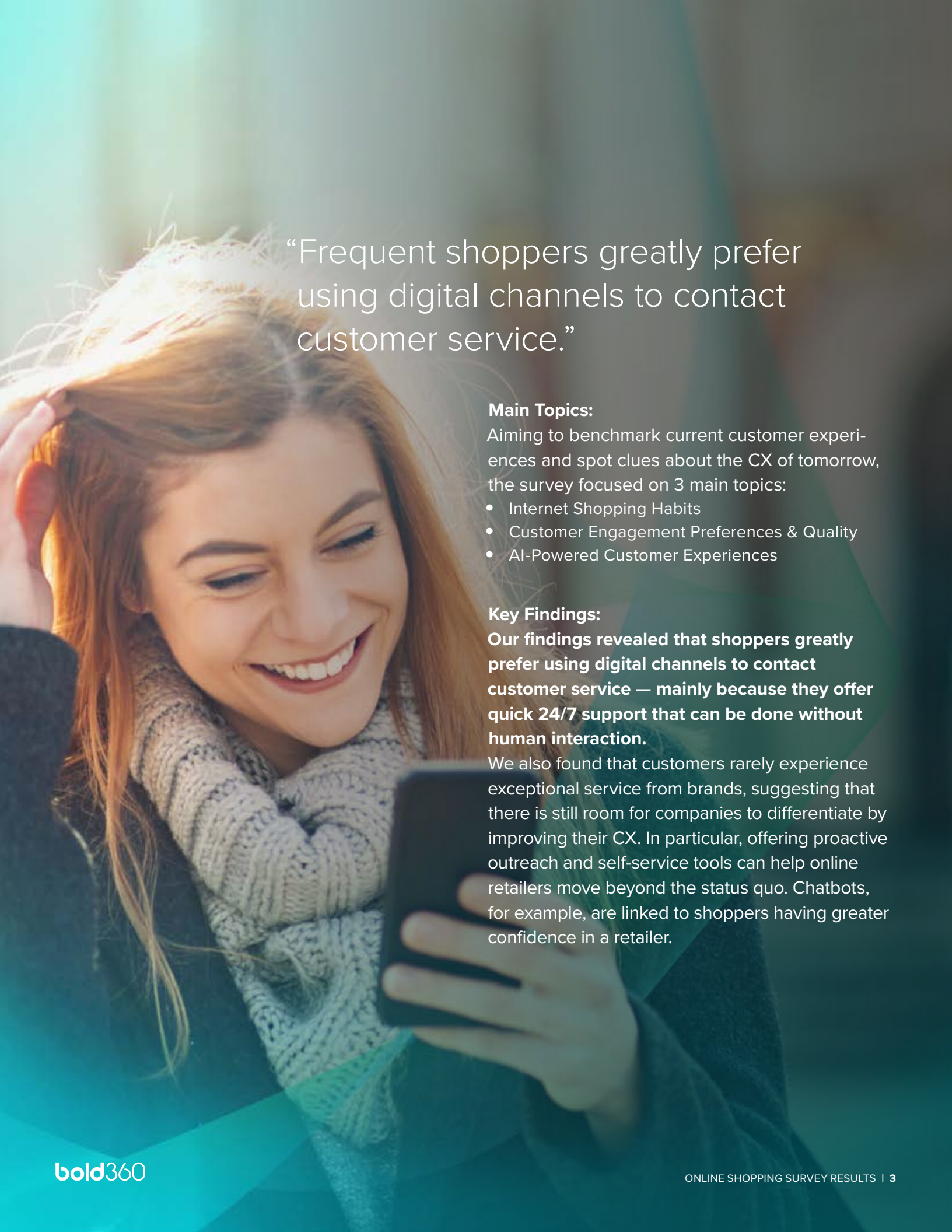
86%

86% of consumers would rather do business with companies that provide proactive service more frequently

Customer Experience (CX) is a relatively new discipline that highlights the importance of the experience that a consumer has with your brand. Staying current with the consumers' changing expectations is a unique challenge, and making predictions about the future of the market is exponentially more difficult.

Because consumer preferences and attitudes change so rapidly, LogMeIn launched a comprehensive survey of frequent internet shoppers to get a pulse on the current state of CX for online shopping. We sought to identify the burgeoning trends that will have a fundamental impact on business's organizational priorities and the CX technology choices they make.

"Frequent shoppers greatly prefer using digital channels to contact customer service."

Main Topics:

Aiming to benchmark current customer experiences and spot clues about the CX of tomorrow, the survey focused on 3 main topics:

- Internet Shopping Habits
- Customer Engagement Preferences & Quality
- AI-Powered Customer Experiences

Key Findings:

Our findings revealed that shoppers greatly prefer using digital channels to contact customer service — mainly because they offer quick 24/7 support that can be done without human interaction.

We also found that customers rarely experience exceptional service from brands, suggesting that there is still room for companies to differentiate by improving their CX. In particular, offering proactive outreach and self-service tools can help online retailers move beyond the status quo. Chatbots, for example, are linked to shoppers having greater confidence in a retailer.

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Internet Shopping Habits
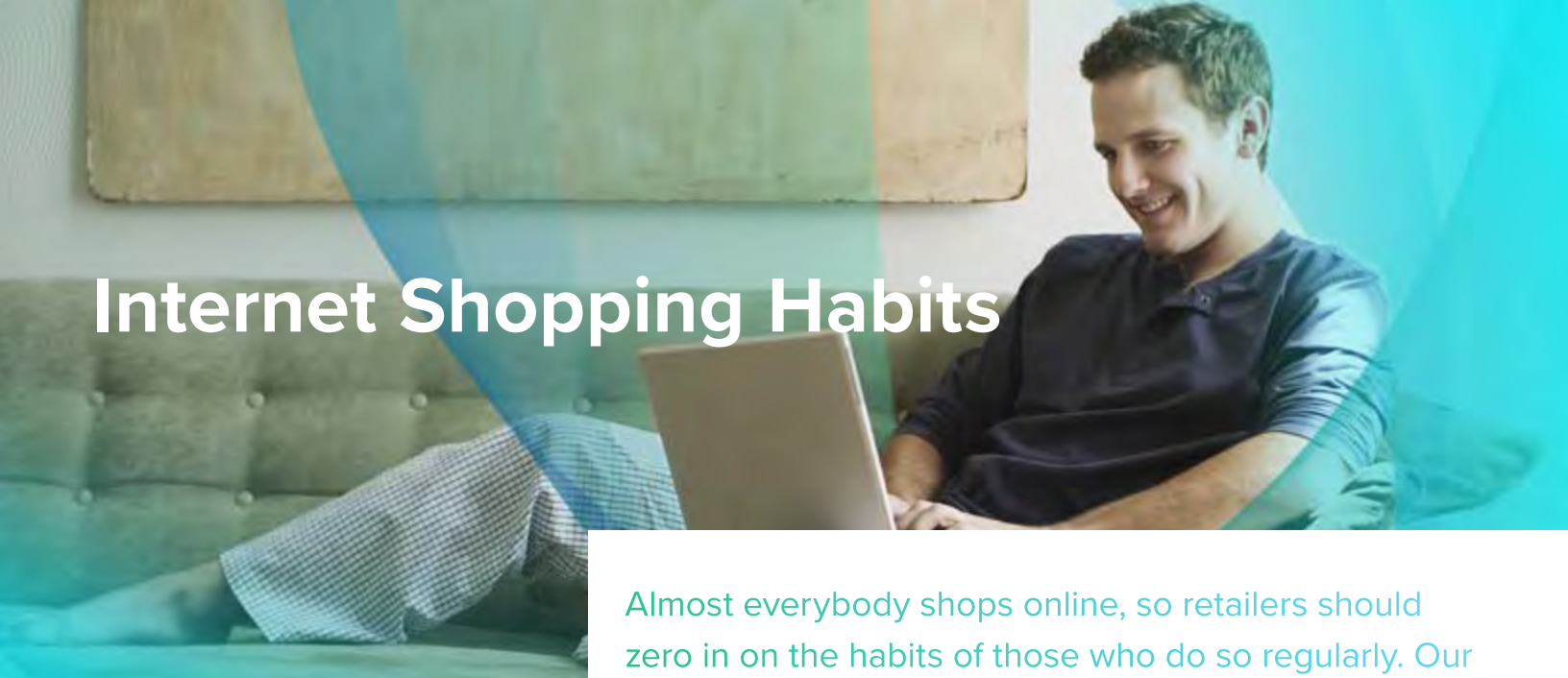
Almost everybody shops online, so retailers should zero in on the habits of those who do so regularly. Our survey looked at what customers are buying, where they are buying it, and how they prefer to get answers to their questions.

Percentage of shoppers who say they will "never" shop online for groceries.

47%

44%

40%

37%

29%

21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   60+

AGE GROUP
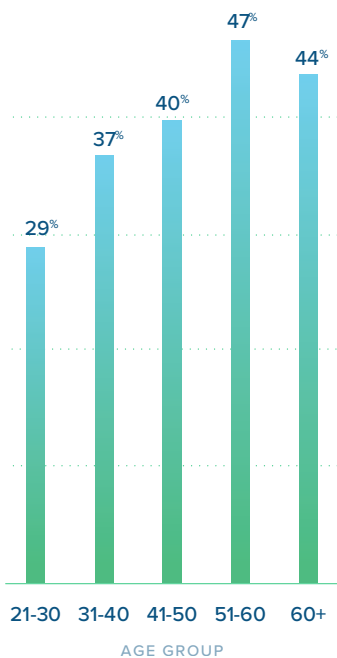
Frequent internet shoppers (those who buy online at least "several" times per month) are buying everything from clothes and jewelry to electronics and sporting goods. Across a myriad of shopping categories, two stood out. Most consumers today say "almost 100% of the time" they book travel online. On the other end of the spectrum, consumers are least likely to buy groceries online. However, the younger demographic was more likely to buy groceries than their older counterparts (see chart at left).

Amazon.com is the leading online destination for our survey participants, with 59% saying their last internet purchase was made there. In addition, 75% of those Amazon shoppers said that they do half or more of all their internet shopping with Amazon. We knew Amazon was going to be a popular answer, but what was surprising is that 101 unique retailers were mentioned by the respondents, but (Amazon aside) only Walmart and eBay received enough mentions to each account for ~3% of the sample.

"We knew Amazon was going to be a popular answer, but what was surprising is that 101 unique retailers were mentioned by the respondents, but (Amazon aside) only Walmart and eBay received enough mentions to each account for ~3% of the sample."

75%

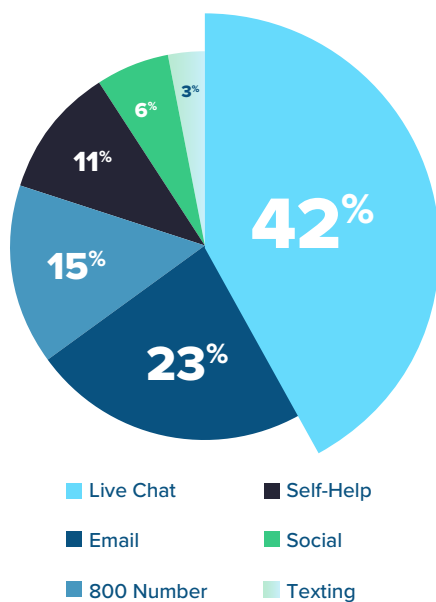**75% of consumers** said that they do at least half of all their internet shopping with Amazon.

59%

59% of consumers buying goods online said their last purchase was on Amazon.

Customer Engagement Preferences & Quality

Preferred Engagement Channel

Legend:
- Live Chat
- Email
- 800 Number
- Self-Help
- Social
- Texting

Pie chart values: 42%, 23%, 15%, 11%, 6%, 3%

This part of the survey sought to understand how frequently shoppers engage with online retailers, the channel they most prefer to use, and their general opinions about these types of interactions.
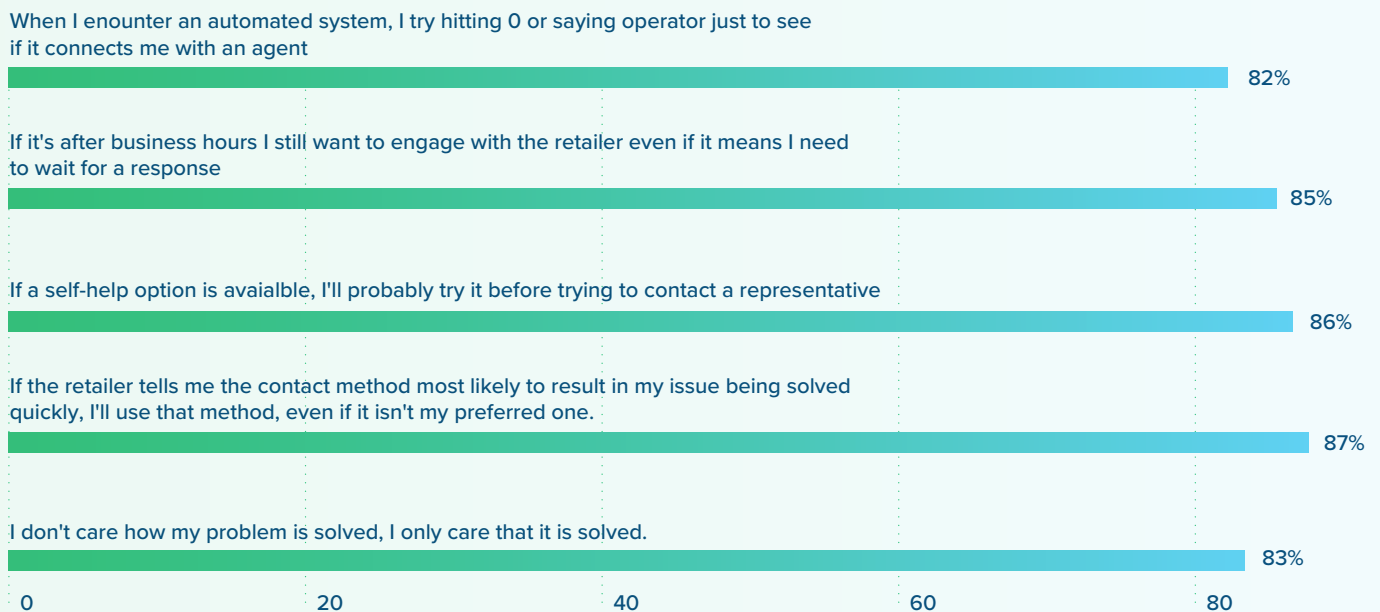
When the need arises to contact a retailer, frequent shoppers prefer live chat (see chart at left). This was an important finding as many retailers still believe that telephone is the preferred channel. 85% of respondents said their channel of choice was a digital one, with only 15% preferring a telephone interaction.

Reaching out to a brand for assistance is common: 58% of frequent online shoppers contact brands they recently purchased from up to six times per month. These consumers are reaching out often and prefer to connect with brands digitally.

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"8 out of 10 respondents reported that if self-service were available, they'd try it before contacting an agent."

Our survey revealed that the reason over half of frequent online shoppers prefer digital communication channels is because they believe they'll get an answer more quickly. Despite their preference for live chat, respondents said that if another channel is more likely to resolve their issue quickly, that's the channel they'd use. Further, more than 8 out of 10 respondents reported that if self-service were available, they'd prefer to use it instead of contacting an agent.

Your customers care about getting in touch with you, and they care about doing it quickly.

When I enounter an automated system, I try hitting 0 or saying operator just to see if it connects me with an agent — 82%

If it's after business hours I still want to engage with the retailer even if it means I need to wait for a response — 85%

If a self-help option is avaialble, I'll probably try it before trying to contact a representative — 86%

If the retailer tells me the contact method most likely to result in my issue being solved quickly, I'll use that method, even if it isn't my preferred one. — 87%

I don't care how my problem is solved, I only care that it is solved. — 83%

0   20   40   60   80

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Why Self-Service?

11% of survey respondents said their preferred channel to connect with a business is a self-service option. They cited speed of resolution, and human contact avoidance as the primary drivers for this choice. Some went so far as to say: "I hate people" and "I don't like people." Those that prefer self-service are much more likely to be men. Of the 47% of the entire respondent pool that was Male, 59% preferred self-service.

Engagement Quality & Proactive Service

88% of respondents reported that contacting a retailer was easy and the situation was resolved within a day. However, one quarter of respondents reported that they are not confident their next interaction will be excellent, stating that their expected chance of getting excellent service is 50% or less.

How can brands build confidence in the quality of service and support they offer? According to the survey, shoppers want brands to be more proactive – solving a problem before being asked. Only 47% of respondents have experienced proactive service. That's a small number, especially considering that 86% of consumers agreed that they'd rather do business with companies that provide proactive service more frequently. In fact, 61% of frequent shoppers are willing to provide more personal information if it means they'll experience more proactive service.

So, how can companies provide proactive service more frequently? 76% of regular online shoppers agreed that one way is with chatbots.

Statements about proactive service

I would prefer to do business with companies that more frequently provide proactive service
86%

Companies that more frequently provide proactive service are more trustworthy than others
77%

I'd be willing to share personal information if it meant I'd experience more proactive service
61%

Technologies like AI will help to more frequently provide proactive service
76%

AI-Powered Customer Experience

This survey also sought to investigate how much experience shoppers have with chatbots, as well as their general attitudes and opinions about them.

Among this group of frequent online shoppers, chatbots received a positive review. Nearly half of respondents (46%) have had one or more chatbot interactions. Other supportive learnings included:

- If the wait time to connect to a real person is 10 minutes or less, more than half (54%) would rather try a chatbot.

- 73% agreed that companies that offer options like chatbots are being proactive about customer service.

- 79% agreed that chatbots are here to stay and will get better, faster, and more capable over time.

Consumers feel positive about chatbots

79%
"Chatbots are here to stay and will get better, faster, more accurate and be able to handle more and more issues successfully."

73%
"After normal business hours, I'd prefer to interact with a chat-bot rather than filling out an email form and waiting until the next day for a response."

73%
"Companies that offer self-service options like chatbots are being proactive about customer service."

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"The status quo will not be sufficient as consumer expectations continue to rise."

Taking all of our data into account, we learned that companies are doing a sufficient job with customer engagement. However, as consumer expectations rise, the quality of service and support that businesses offer will need to elevate. There is a competitive advantage to be gained by businesses that create exceptional experiences for their customers. Offering proactive outreach is one way to deliver experiences that go beyond consumer expectations. Technologies like AI-powered chatbots help brands deliver the level of service that inspires trust and leads to customer loyalty.

Methodology

Over one thousand U.S. consumers were surveyed (n=1,008) in the fall of 2018. Of the entire sample, 51% identified as Female while 47% identified as Male. Demographic data for household income, education, and state of residence were also collected. When appropriate and statistically relevant, these factors are revealed as part of the analysis.

The focus on frequent shoppers was purposeful as, historically, the online retailing community — and those the regularly shop online — have been on the forefront of new technologies.

The online sample was acquired in partnership with Research Now SSI so any overlap with LogMeIn's customer base was purely coincidental.

Engage smarter.

Deliver value, instantly, with a more human AI, platform and interface.

Bold360 is an intelligent customer engagement solution that provides businesses with actionable customer insights to efficiently deliver richer and more personalized experiences in real time. We provide the digital channels and tools needed to engage and support consumers as they seamlessly move across self-service and agent-assisted channels like chat, email, messaging and social.

Visit **www.bold360.com** to learn more.

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