

ventrica

Turning customer interactions into revenue-generating opportunities



White paper

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Executive summary

For too long, customer contact centres have focused their performance metrics on the number of calls handled, the time to resolution, and the number of issues resolved. As a result, investment has heavily focused on efficiency, whether through workflow design, technology, or automation. But in the race to cut costs and streamline operations, many businesses have become overly reliant on AI and automation, often at the expense of providing emotive customer experiences.

Speed to resolution is very important, but the obsession with efficiency has led to increasingly standardised interactions. Customers today are presented with a seemingly endless sequence of triaging that can leave them frustrated and feeling like just another number in the queue. These interactions may be the most efficient, but they are also the most devoid of emotion and empathy, focused solely on the ticking clock.

Customer care leaders are getting too caught up in the numbers. Just take a look at [McKinsey's 'Where is Customer Care in 2024' report](#). Customer experience is dropping down the priority list, with tech implementation for efficiency purposes rising steadily.

Efficiency itself isn't the problem, it's when it comes at the cost of customer experience. The two should be working in harmony, not following opposite trajectories. If you treat customers like numbers, they'll start to feel like it. Yes, this approach might hit contact handling goals this way, but this will be at the cost of creating positive emotive experiences. The best customer service strategies don't just resolve issues – they build relationships.

We carried out this research to test our belief that customers who feel truly valued, understood, and cared for are more likely to be repeat purchasers. We believe that emotive customer interactions can be a revenue generator for brands. In an increasingly digital world, we shouldn't lose focus on what actually creates a meaningful, positive experience for customers.



Iain Banks,
CEO, Ventrica

The revenue opportunity for customer services

A positive and emotionally intelligent customer experience at a contact centre has the potential to be a secret weapon for brands looking to drive loyalty and increase revenues. Our research found that consumers reach out to customer services five times a year on average. Now imagine if each of those interactions were revenue-generating opportunities.

Getting it right and converting these interactions into revenue opportunities is nothing short of a balancing act. You need to find the happy medium between efficiency and quality. According to our data, streamlining your operations too much could see brands lose customers with 67% stopping using a product or service following a poor experience. But the opportunity is there, and it's one that you can't afford to let slip by.

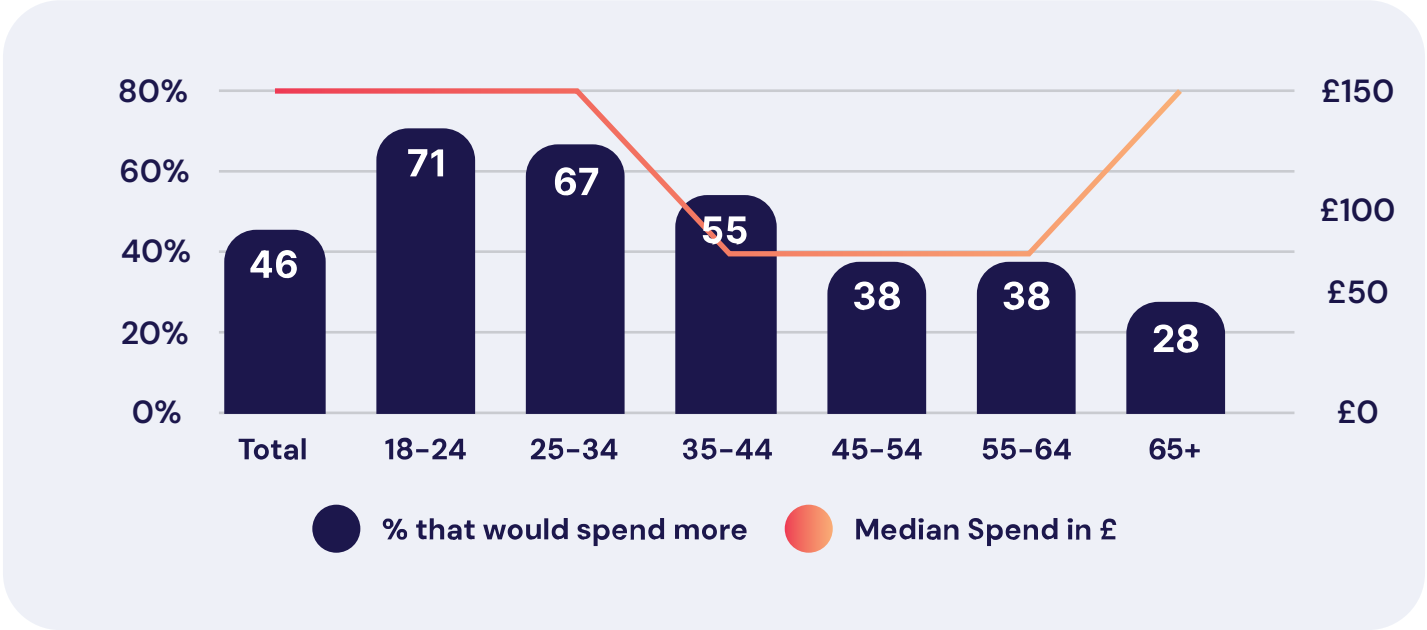
01 The revenue opportunity of positive experiences

So, if consumers contact customer services 5 times a year on average, what benefit could you really see from ensuring that those experiences are positive and emotive?

According to our research, nearly half (46%) of consumers who contacted customer services would spend more following a positive experience with a brand.

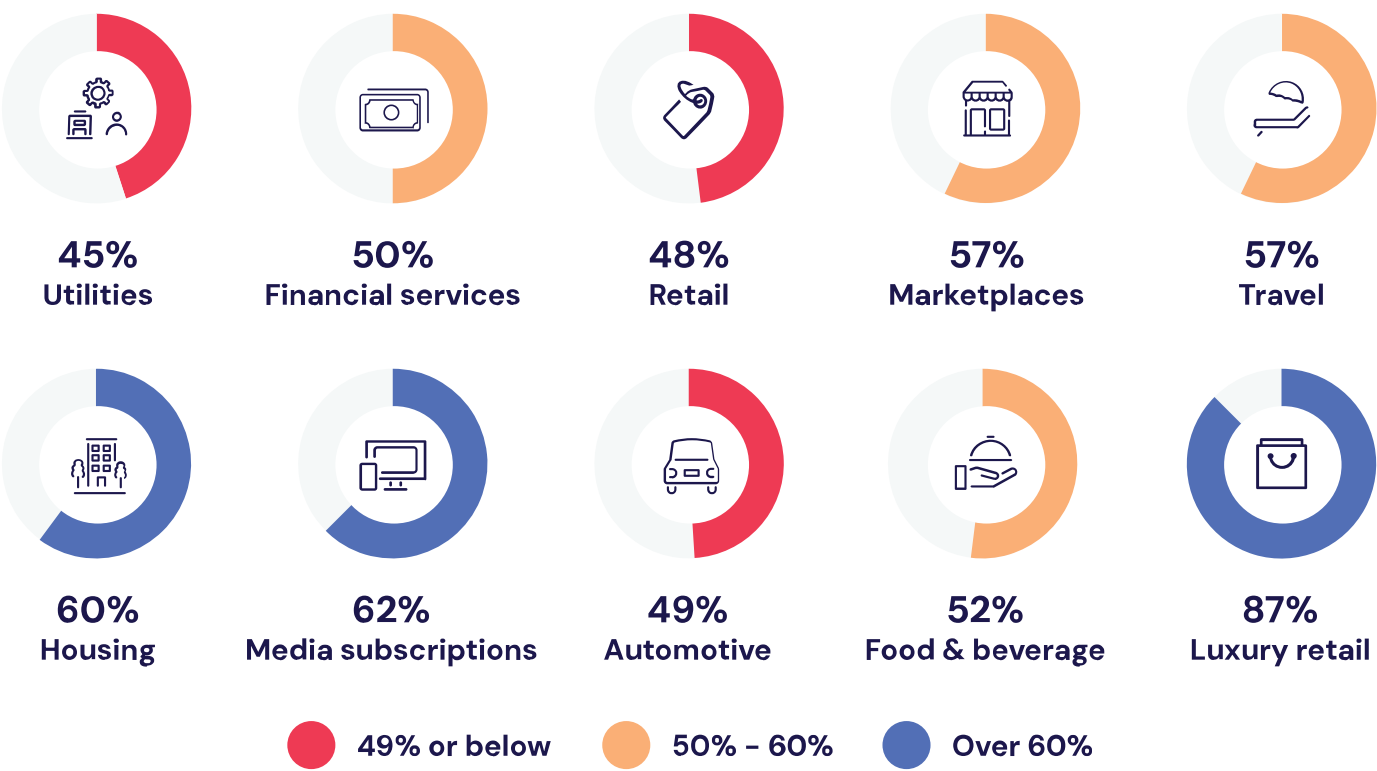
While the figures vary across industries, it spikes in certain industries like luxury retail, where 87% of consumers in that category are more likely to increase spending following a positive interaction. While it varies across generations – with younger consumers willing to spend more – across all age brackets a positive experience increases the willingness to spend further with a brand.

Would a positive experience with a brand make you spend more with them in the future? And how much more would you spend?



It’s clear that no matter what generation the consumer belongs to, or what industry they are purchasing in, a positive experience is a potential revenue driver.

Would a positive experience with a brand make you spend more with them in the future?

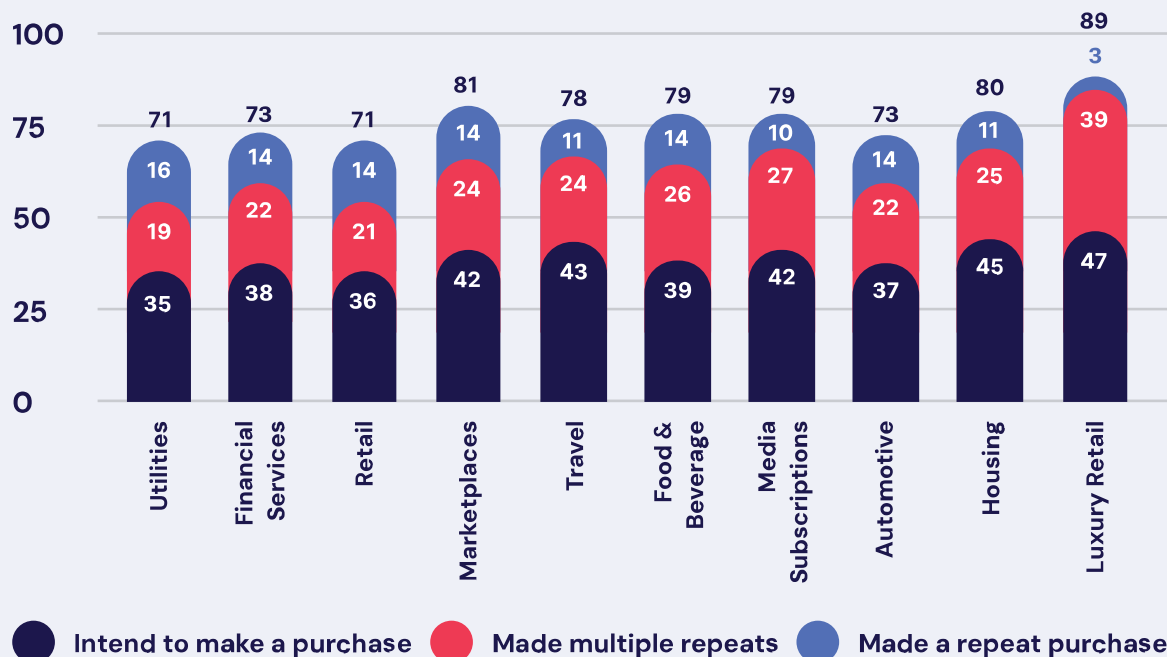


02 Positive experiences drive repeat purchases and brand loyalty

The willingness to increase spending as a result of positive customer interaction is there, but how often will consumers follow through on these intentions?

Our research found that **53% of consumers made a repeat purchase following a positive experience**, with one in five making multiple purchases with the same brand. **A further 16% intend to make another purchase with a brand that provided a positive experience**, bringing the **total potential of repeat purchases to 69%**. For those repeat purchasers, the **median spend was between £100–£199**, with this only **dropping to £50–£199 in retail and utilities**.

Have you made or do you intend to make a repeat purchase following a positive customer experience?



Why? Simply put – brand loyalty. Our research suggests that it increases significantly following a positive interaction with a brand. The majority of consumers (**79%**), reported that their loyalty to a brand increased following a positive customer service interaction.

£100–£199

The median amount consumers would be willing to spend following a positive customer experience.

5x customer service enquiries a year



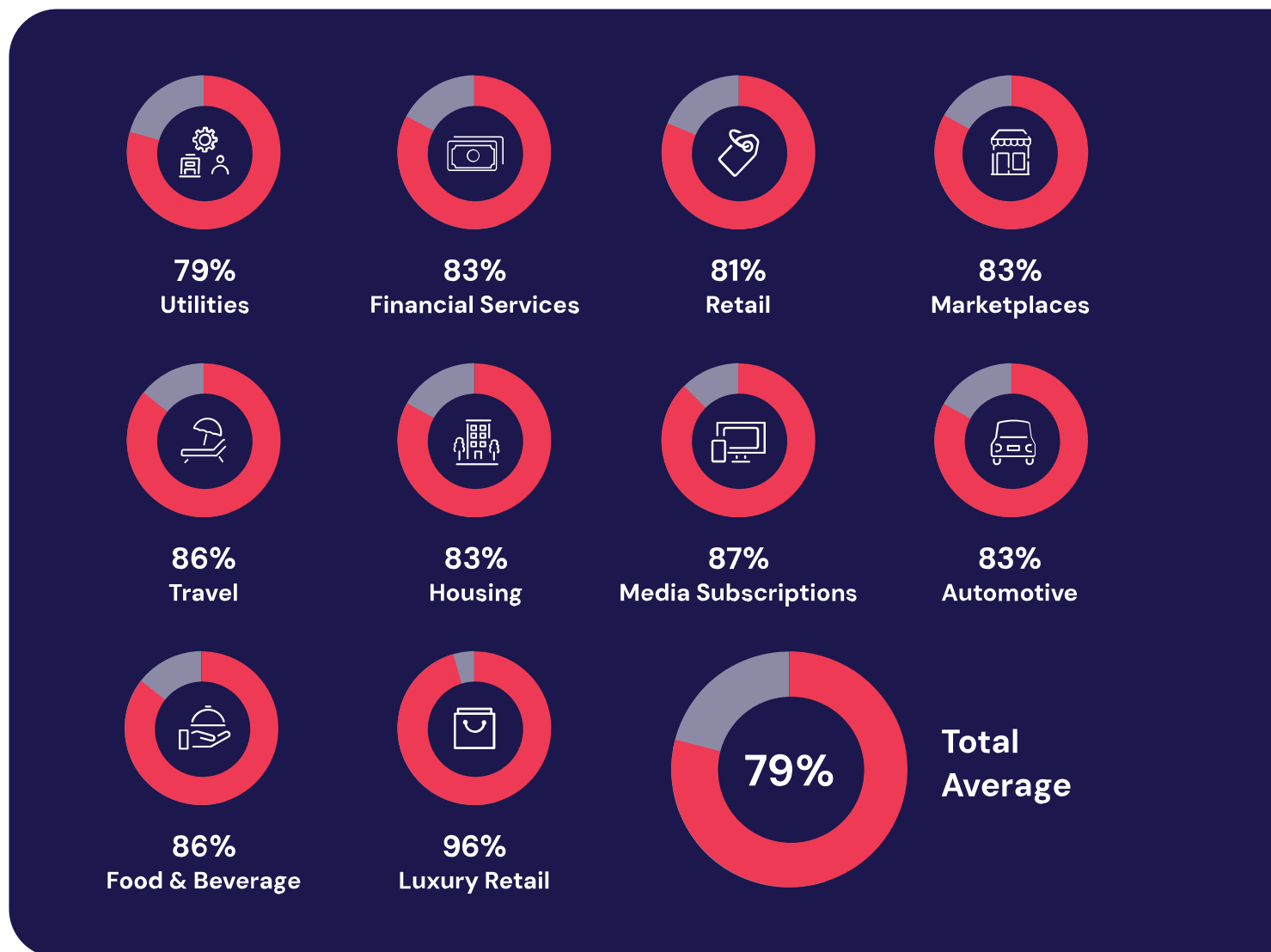
16% Intend to make a repeat purchase

29% Made multiple repeat purchases

35% Made a repeat purchase

If brands invest in delivering positive customer experiences, consumers could spend **over £500 more per year** on average.

The percentage of respondents that said their loyalty to a brand improved following a positive experience.

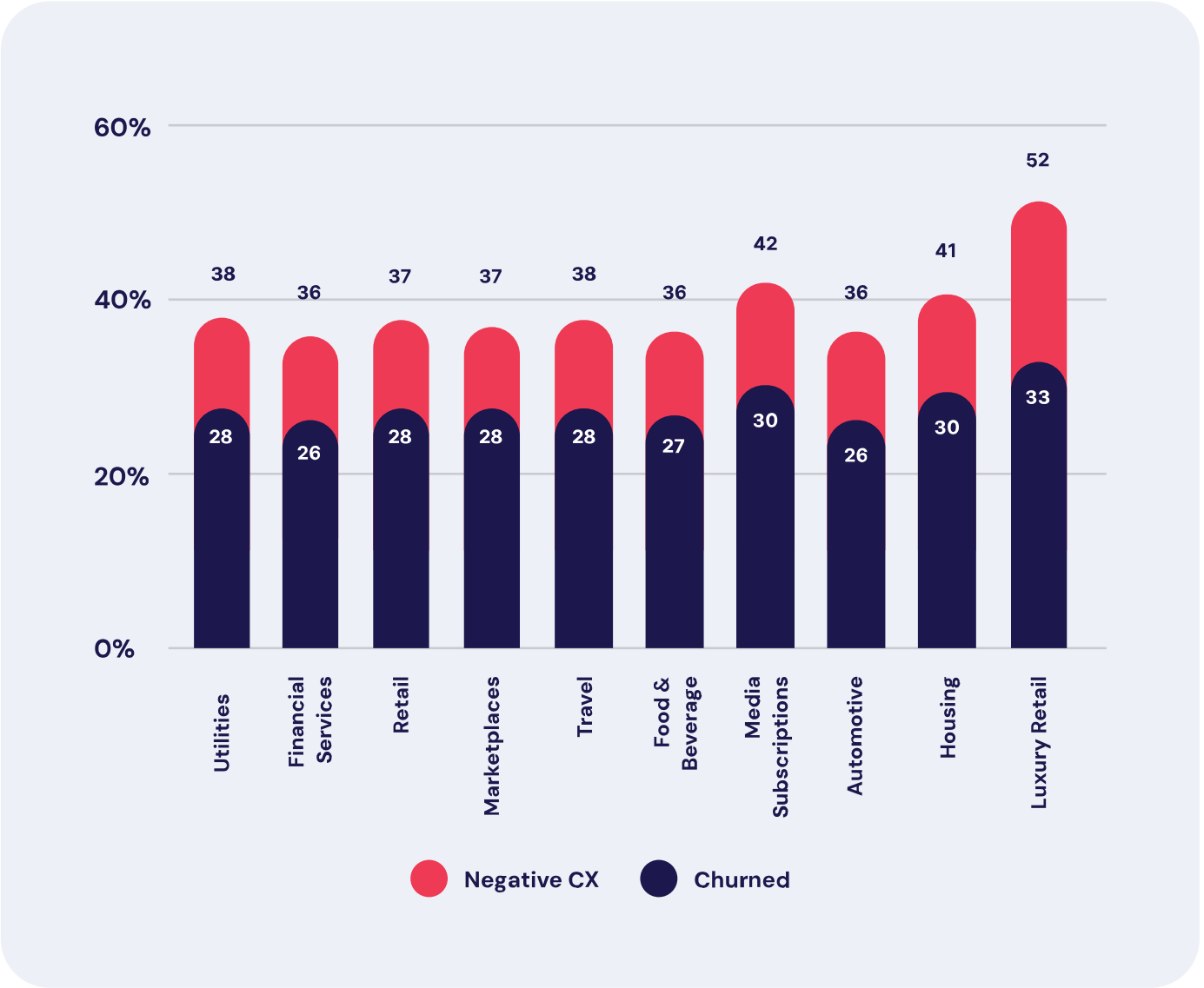


03 Negative experience = Churn

But what happens if brands don't invest in creating positive, emotive customer experiences? We think they risk losing loyal customers and potential revenue opportunities – and the research agrees.

Almost a third of customer service experiences (**31%**) were negative. And when broken down by sector, it doesn't improve. Luxury retail (**52%**), Media subscriptions (**42%**), and Housing (**41%**) had the highest rates of negative experience. Now imagine the average customer who contacts customer services five times in a year. According to the odds, at least one of those experiences would be negative, what effect would that have on customer loyalty?

Of the total number of enquiries to each industry, what percentage of respondents had a negative or neutral experience and how many respondents stopped using using a product or service because of a poor experience.



Well, when asked, over two-thirds (67%) of those who had a negative experience would stop buying from the brand. It appears that the majority of customers don't give brands a second chance. Customer service needs to be a positive and emotive experience each and every time a customer uses it, otherwise brands face churning customers at pace.

Across sectors, following a negative experience, the average churn rate was over a quarter (28%), with some sectors like Luxury Retail churning up to a third (33%) of their customers following a negative interaction. At this rate, if negative experiences aren't minimised, brands could churn through their whole customer base in no time at all.

What does a positive customer experience look like?

If you listen to the technology providers in the space, you'd believe that customers want more self-serve options and more chatbots. And many companies are listening, increasingly turning to AI to optimise every touchpoint of their customers' journey. But our research has found that in reality, it's not the right approach.

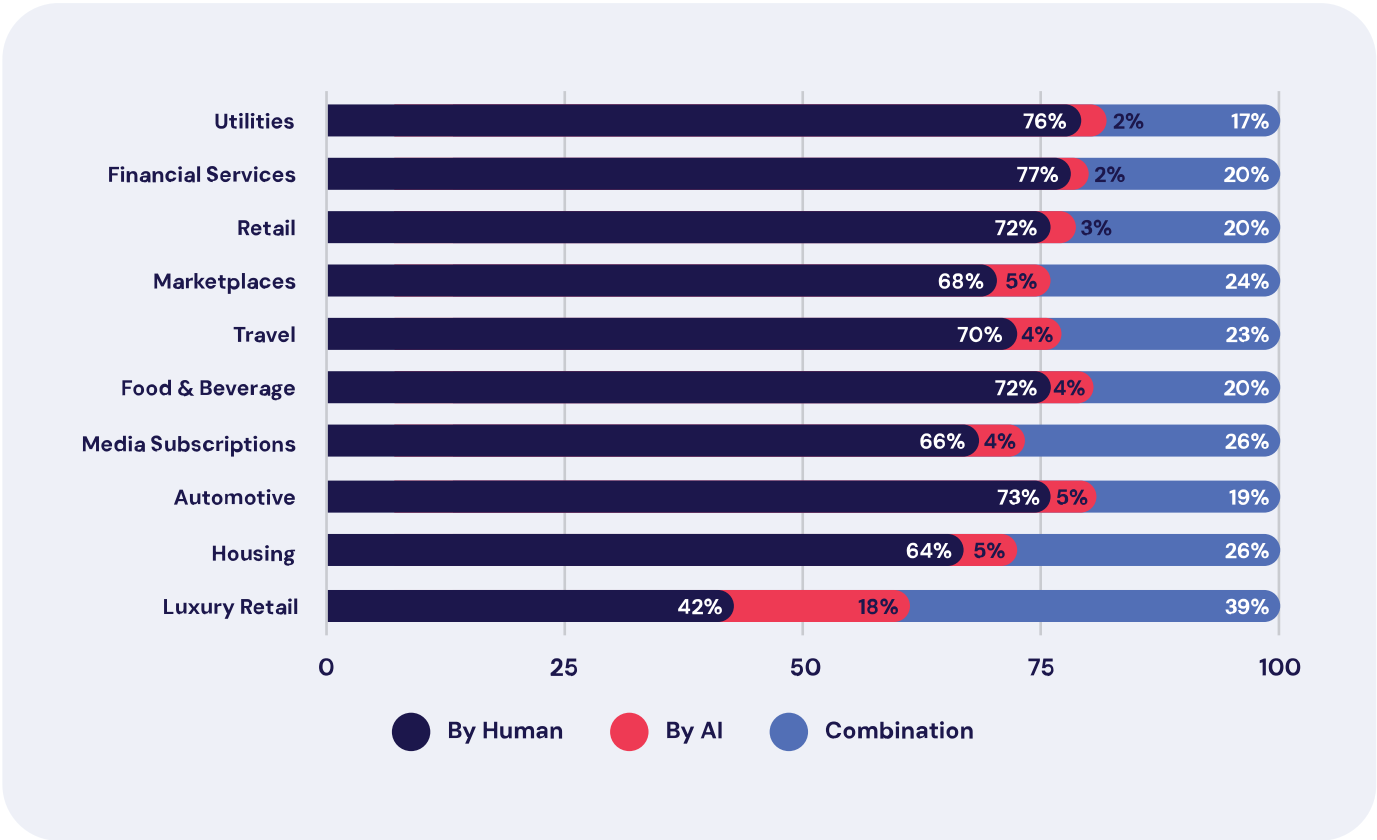
As we turn to new automated solutions and AI tools to drive efficiency improvements and reduce costs, we must tread carefully. While the cost savings might be compelling, you may put additional revenue at risk, especially if your customer base is largely comprised of the older generations.

The market might sing the praises of chatbots and self-serve customer experiences, consumers rarely share this sentiment. According to Gartner, **64%** of consumers prefer companies that don't use AI in their customer services. But could this be down to the misuse of AI in customer experience, and not AI itself?

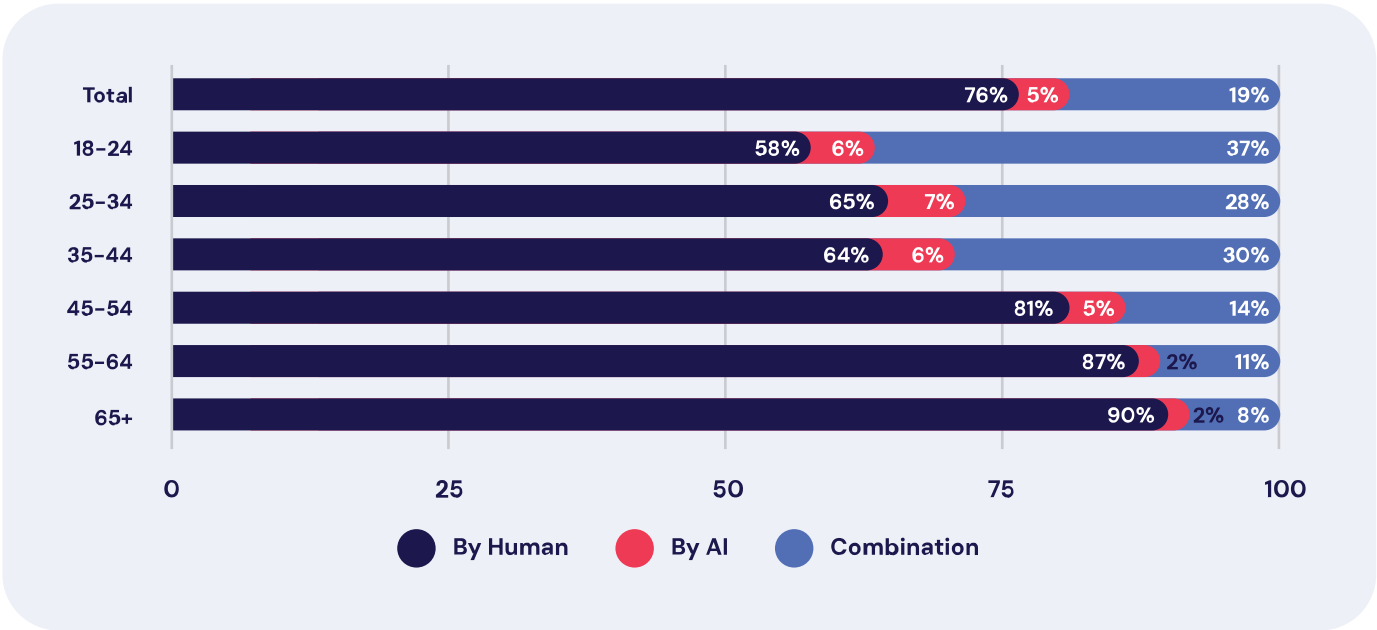
01 AI shouldn't replace your human agents

The majority (**76%**) of consumers reported that their positive experiences were delivered by a human, and that's down to a simple reason – there's nothing quite like human connection and empathy. People need to remain a vital part of the process to take them beyond positive experiences, making them truly emotive as well. But this doesn't mean that AI should be completely out of the equation.

How are your positive customer experiences typically delivered?



While older consumers were more likely to say that their positive experience was delivered by a human, younger consumers saw higher numbers of positive experiences delivered by a combination of human and AI.



When asked what factors made up a positive experience, the results were a blend of both worlds. A 'quick resolution' was by far the most popular with **69%** choosing it. Followed by 'the interaction was clear and easy to understand' at **45%** and 'the representative showed empathy and understanding' at **31%**.

What factors make up a positive experience



So while more human attributes like empathy were valued highly, more so were AI-leaning attributes such as speed and clarity. If companies can hit the right balance, pairing AI efficiency with the right amount of human empathy and interaction to deliver positive and emotive experiences, they'll strike gold.

Using technology as your switchboard operator

It's clear that the channels that work best are ones often staffed by people, whether that's a call centre or someone at the end of an email. As we transition to an automated future, we should be using technology to smooth the path to human interaction, not block it.

No business will ever have unlimited human agents ready and waiting to pick up the phone, and this is where AI can pick up some of the slack. Operating as a support tool for human customer service agents, AI chatbots and automation tools can deal with more routine interactions. This keeps human customer service agents available to deal with the more complex or high-value issues that require a human spark of problem-solving and empathy to solve.

While the majority of consumers (**82%**) still prefer to place a call to customer services, they aren't averse to using different channels to engage with brands for enquiries. Email (**75%**) and chatbots (**65%**) were both also popular methods used by consumers.

What channels did you use to contact customer services?



82%
Called



39%
Used Messenger



36%
Used Social Media



75%
Emailed



65%
Chatbot

With more consumers using these alternative methods of communication, AI analytical tools such as sentiment or conversational analysis could also be leveraged to mine these interactions. Gathering knowledge that can be used to give customer service agents real-time insights or guidance during future difficult conversations.

Alternative channels are growing in popularity, but they'll never outgrow human interaction. Our research found that even if contact was initiated on other channels, three-quarters of consumers still required human interaction to receive a positive resolution to their enquiry. But, this doesn't mean this process is slower. Using these tools to capture enquiry details faster, customer service teams can solve customer problems faster. They'll be pre-aware of what the issue involves, and what solutions could be available thanks to the insights provided by AI – and more able to focus on delivering not just a successful experience, but an emotive one.

Today more than ever, consumers expect emotionally intelligent interactions in every facet of their experience. With all the hype around AI, it's easy to forget that, no matter what industry you're in, every interaction ultimately serves humans. For over a century, we've heard the customer is always right. But as we move forward into a future powered by AI, we must remind ourselves of a simple truth: the customer is always human. Brands must create customer experiences that take this into account. You need to understand that to deliver outstanding service, you need to create connections that feel more personal, emotionally intelligent, and authentic.

That's why we've partnered with Ventrifica. We know AI can help organisations quickly assess what someone needs and how they're feeling before prescribing the right mix of automation and human assistance. But the assistance requires the right balance of efficiency and emotion. By combining powerful purpose-built AI solutions with emotionally intelligent human agents, brands can streamline the path to resolution and build a more efficient and empathetic customer experience. Resolving issues faster, at higher volumes and with higher customer satisfaction. It all adds up to exceptional service that's more accurate, personalised and empathetic for every human you touch.

– Andrew Lawson, EVP EMEA, SVP Global Sales, Zendesk

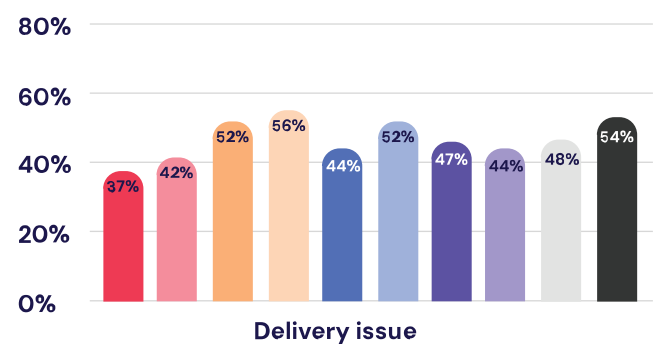
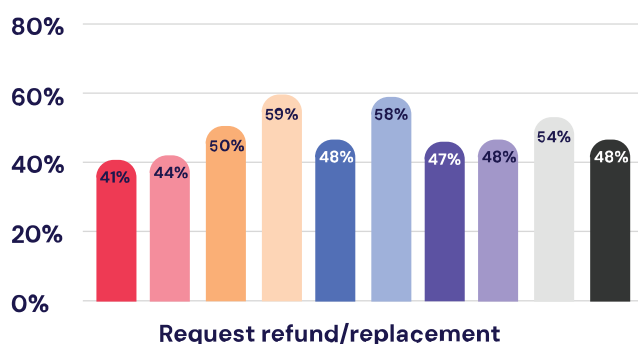
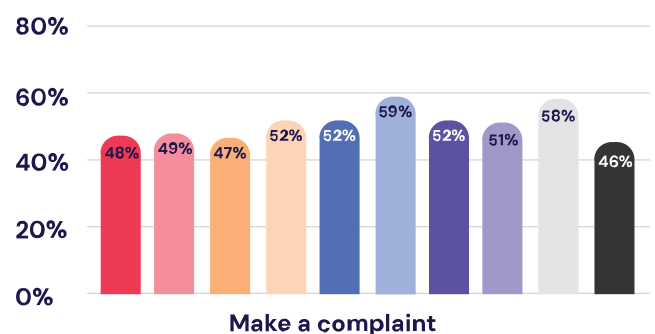
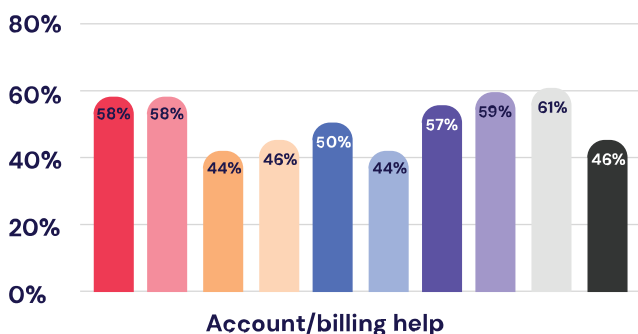
We recently became a premium partner with Zendesk to achieve just that. Using our AI technology to understand the query and serve agents with the right information from their knowledge centres before they are even connected to the customer. Ensuring a rapid positive response and outcome to customer enquiries.

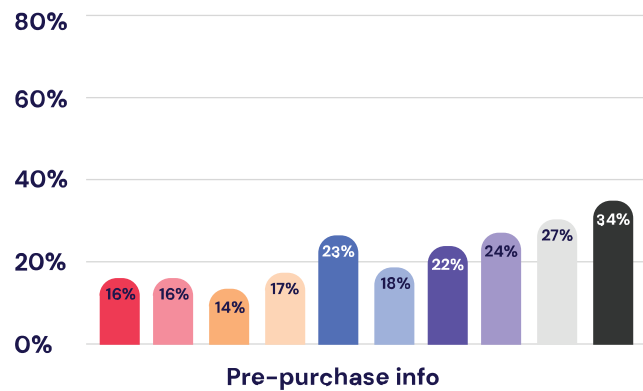
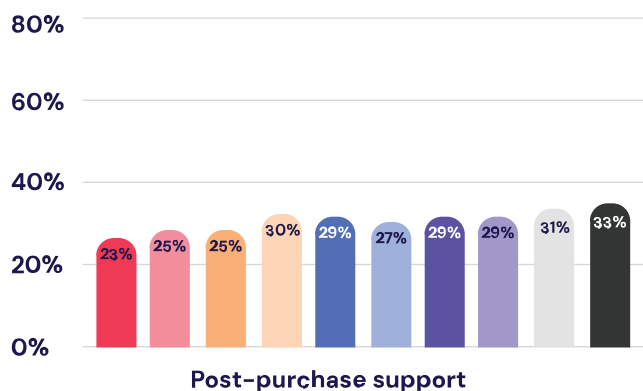
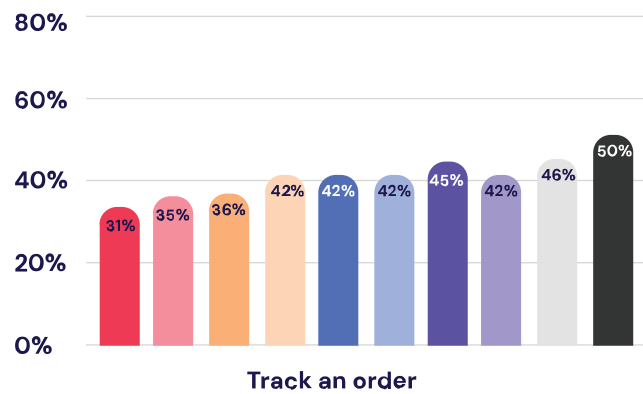
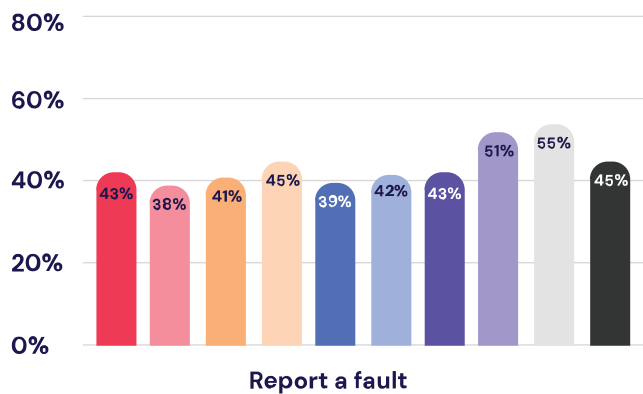
Turning a problem into a **solution**

While it would be nice, customers rarely get in touch with contact centres to pass on praise. Typically, they get in touch if they have an issue or want to resolve a problem.

Our research agreed, with **44%** of customers contacting for accounts or billing enquiries, closely followed by **41%** who wanted to make a complaint. Of course, this varied across sectors with some receiving more complaints than others. At **59%** food and beverage came out the worst, followed closely by housing at **58%** but marketplaces received the most refund requests of all by far, with **59%** contacting them directly for refund requests, bypassing the complaint stage altogether.

Why did you contact customer services





Contrary to popular belief, the younger generations were the most likely to get in touch to complain than any other generation, with **54%** of 18 to 24-year-olds doing so.

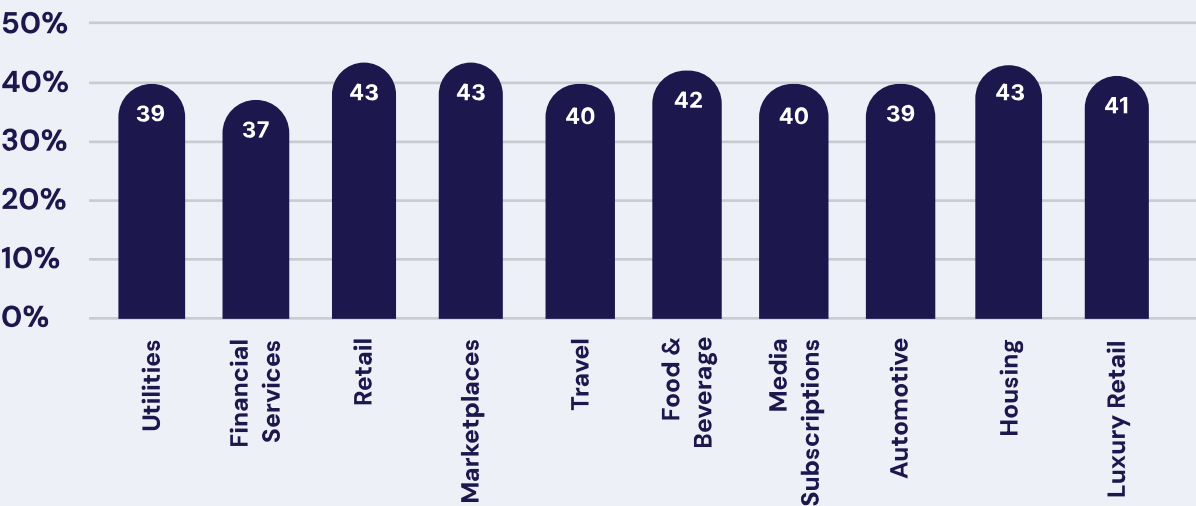
Why did you contact customer service – percentage of people that selected to make a complaint.



Regardless of age, with so many customers getting in touch with issues, sending them straight to a bot or an automatic call-forwarding process will only frustrate them further. Most of the time, they are just looking for someone to speak to who can resolve their issue. If instead of approaching these interactions as a done deal we work to turn them around, these ‘negative’ contacts can be transformed into brand loyalty and revenue-building opportunities.

As our research shows, a negative reason for contact doesn’t guarantee a negative experience. **41%** of enquiries that were the result of an issue, such as a faulty or lost product, were turned into positive experiences. Retail, marketplaces, and housing performed the best, turning just shy of half (**43%**) of negative contacts into positive outcomes.

Of the positive experiences you encountered in 2024, how many of your enquiries were a result of an issue, such as a faulty or lost product?



However, there’s still a way to go. Not all sectors were so invested in transforming negative contacts into positive outcomes. Financial services (**37%**) and Automotive (**39%**) were the worst performers, converting just over a third into positive outcomes.

For brands that acknowledge the opportunity and look for efficient ways to triage them to the right person, negative experiences can become wins. Helping them transform the customer experience into one that drives revenue, loyalty and repeat business – all while improving their overall customer experience.

Emotive experiences are key for the long-term

While customer care leaders have been busy integrating AI to keep up with demand, they've lost sight of the true value of customer service centres. They're not just there to solve issues, they can create positive experiences that benefit not just the customers, but the business's bottom line too. As email and chatbots grow in popularity amongst consumers, customer care leaders need to remember that it's unlikely that they'll be a one-stop shop. With three quarters of these interactions still requiring human interaction down the line, these avenues should be utilised properly. Adopting AI analytical tools in these interactions can greatly improve call handling time, so that when a consumer does speak to a customer service agent, they'll already have all the information available to them.

Yes, customers prefer speed when it comes to customer service interactions, but they also prioritise empathy and understanding. Hitting the right balance of AI support and human customer service agents will be essential to unlock the true potential of customer service centres. Replacing human agents with AI is often down to a cost-saving or efficiency exercise, but our research has proven that this isn't the best option. AI is simply unable to deliver an emotive customer experience, and on average, only **5%** of AI customer interactions are positive as a result. Businesses can't afford to rely solely on it. Whatever cost-savings it brings will inevitably be

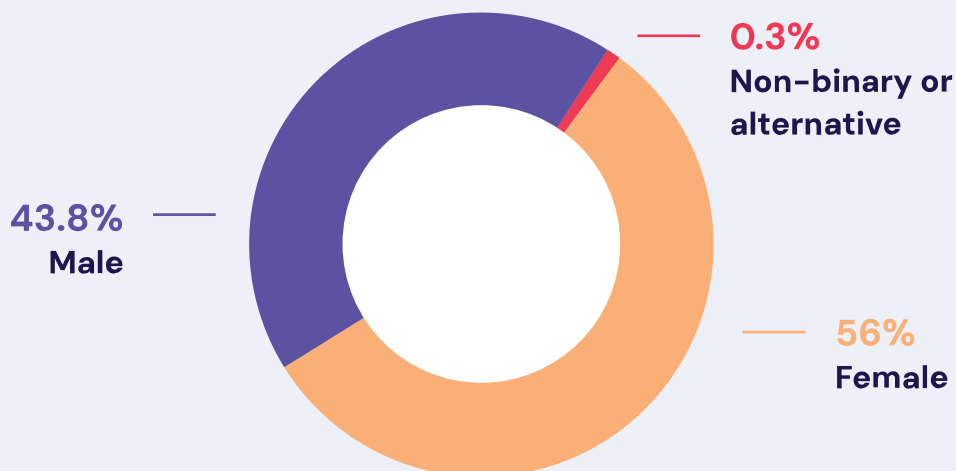
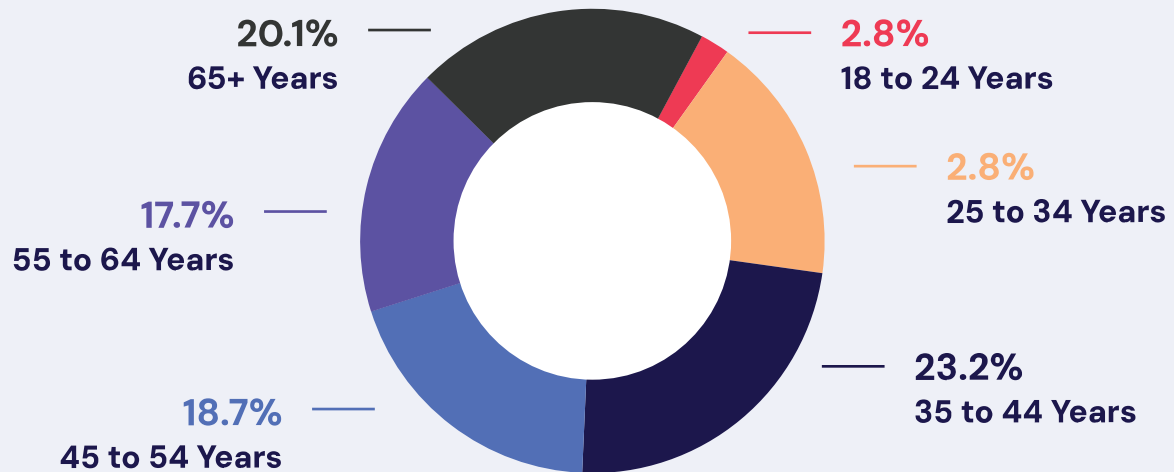
outweighed by inflated customer service problems and resolution. With over two-thirds of consumers spending or intending to spend more following a positive interaction at a median spend between £100 and £199, investing in a human/AI customer service centre setup will only unlock more revenue.

Delivering an Emotive Customer Experience

As a trusted customer service and customer experience partner of choice for some of the world's best-known brands, at Ventrica we know our stuff. We've developed our own software and technologies that are tailored to meet the needs of each brands contact centre individually. This, paired with our talented customer service staff who are true brand ambassadors for our clients, has made us one of Europe's leading customer management outsourcers. We provide more than just a customer service partner, we deliver emotive customer experiences. Get in touch at info@ventrica.co.uk to find out how we can help your brand transform the impact of your customer experience from a negative to a positive.

Methodology

Ventrica commissioned One Poll to survey 2,000 consumers in the UK. The survey was commissioned in January 2025 and surveyed UK adults who had contacted customer services in the last 12 months.





White paper

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