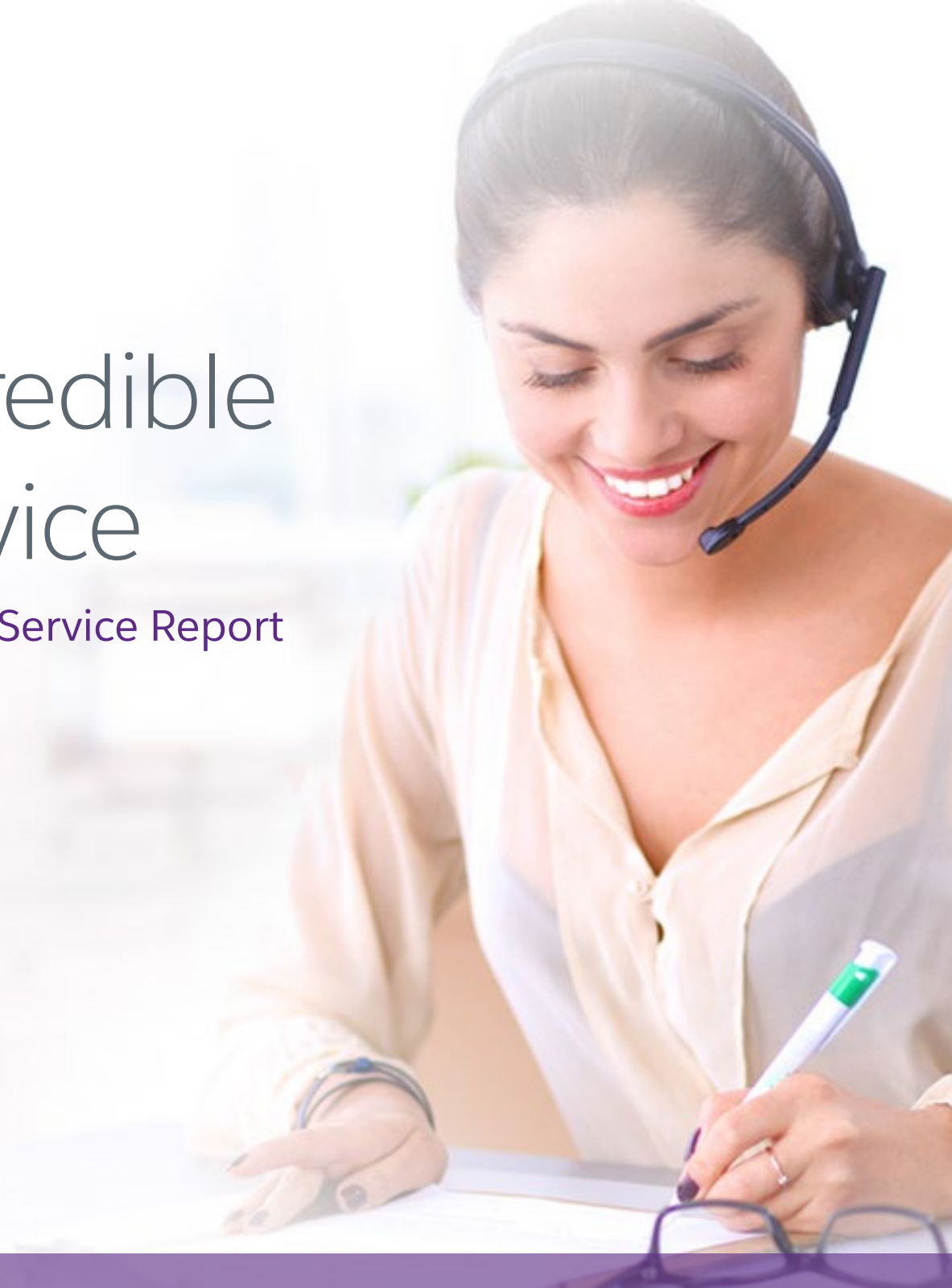


4 Steps to Incredible Customer Service

Insights from the 2015 State of Service Report



Introduction

Over the past several years, customer service has undergone a dramatic shift. Once, you might have had only one option for contacting a company: making a telephone call, within business hours, and waiting until an agent got to your call.

Now, following in the steps of marketers, customer service is taking an omni-channel approach, and providing service on every channel, everywhere. This shift was driven by customers who are reaching out via email, text message, social media, live chat, and apps. We can connect with anyone, anywhere, instantly.

Customers have come to expect the same level of responsiveness from businesses. They expect outstanding service, and if they don't get it, they move on to competitors. Your customer service agents need to be more than support agents; they're going to be your brand ambassadors, too.

Imagine this scenario: A customer calls and your agent knows who they are, what products they have, and all the previous interactions the customer had with the company – regardless of the channel. Your agent is able to access and deliver all of the information the customer needs and resolves the issue quickly. Sounds great, right? This scenario can become a reality for any business. Recently, we surveyed more than 1,900 global service leaders for our [“2015 State of Service” report](#), and we looked at the actions top performers were taking to deliver exceptional service. All statistics in this e-book, unless otherwise indicated, were pulled from the report. Read on to learn how you can take your customer service to the next level.

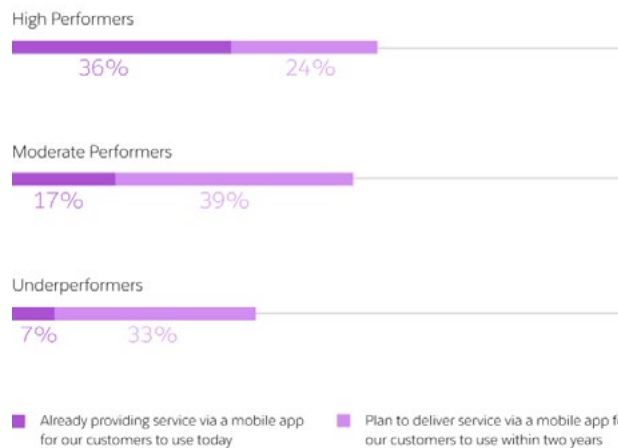
Table of Contents

- 03** Go Where Your Customers Are
- 06** Empower Your Agents
- 09** Anticipate Customer Needs
- 12** Offer Self-Service Options

Chapter 1

Go Where Your Customers Are

Today's customers are driving change in the way service teams operate. Because we now live in a super-connected digital age, customers have high expectations for on-demand, efficient service. People share poor experiences online – and some particularly bad examples of service even go viral. So how are businesses rising to the challenge to meet customer demands?



Meet Customers on Their Own Turf

According to [Flurry](#), smartphone users now spend an average of almost three hours a day on their devices. A good portion of that time is spent communicating with each other via messaging and social media. We've gotten used to the instantaneous responses our actions trigger: text message notifications appearing, chat windows popping up, Twitter and Facebook alerts for new interactions. This is the new normal for how we interact, and we've also come to expect customer service to be just as instantaneous as our personal interactions are. And it makes sense: if individuals communicate this way, why can't companies?

56%

of businesses plan to provide in-app service in the next two years.

The best-performing service organizations connect with customers wherever they are: via phone, email, mobile apps and social networks. High-performing service teams are **four times more likely than underperformers** to have very good or outstanding capabilities in mobile and social customer service. Meeting customers where they are helps create a more efficient service interaction.

Mobile Apps on the Rise

In recent years, consumers have migrated from desktop computers to mobile devices, where app usage has exploded. This presents an opportunity for businesses to offer new service channels. Many companies now have customer-facing mobile apps, and over one-third of high-performing service teams are already providing service there. As companies realize the value of this channel, more service leaders are looking to expand into this space.

Technology to the Rescue

Due to the growth in mobile and social service channels, companies are anticipating an **increase of more than 20% in inbound service requests** across mobile app, mobile chat, and social networks. It's no surprise that this spike is leading service teams to double down on service technologies to manage the volume. Tools like embedded mobile video chat, offline mobile cases, and social media monitoring help simplify the agent experience and give customers a seamless channel-to-channel experience.

Key Takeaways:

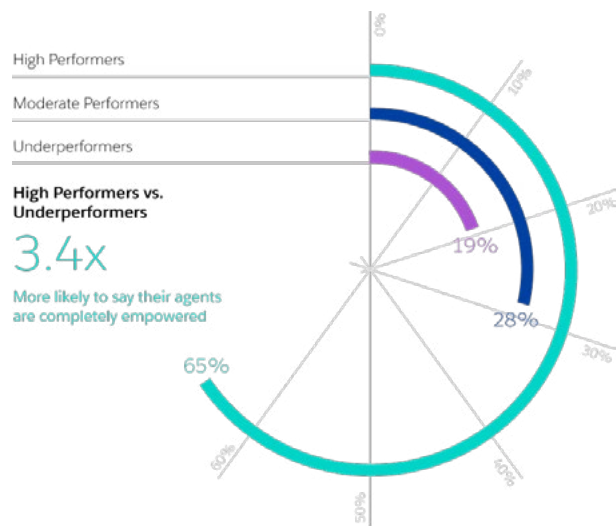
Service teams must go where there customers are.

- ⊕ Providing omni-channel customer service creates more efficient service interactions.
- ⊕ The rise of mobile apps is an opportunity to provide a personalized, effective customer experience.
- ⊕ Service teams are seeking technology solutions to provide seamless communication as service requests increase across mobile and social channels.

Chapter 2

Empower Your Agents

Most people remember the catchphrase from the movie Jerry Maguire: “Help me help you.” This might be the rallying call of customer service agents everywhere. Customer service agents are under a lot of pressure. Not only do they have a huge impact on a customer’s experience and perception of a company, but they’re also communicating with disgruntled people, often in real time, who expect their problems to be solved immediately. Top service teams empower their agents to act quickly and effectively to resolve customer issues.



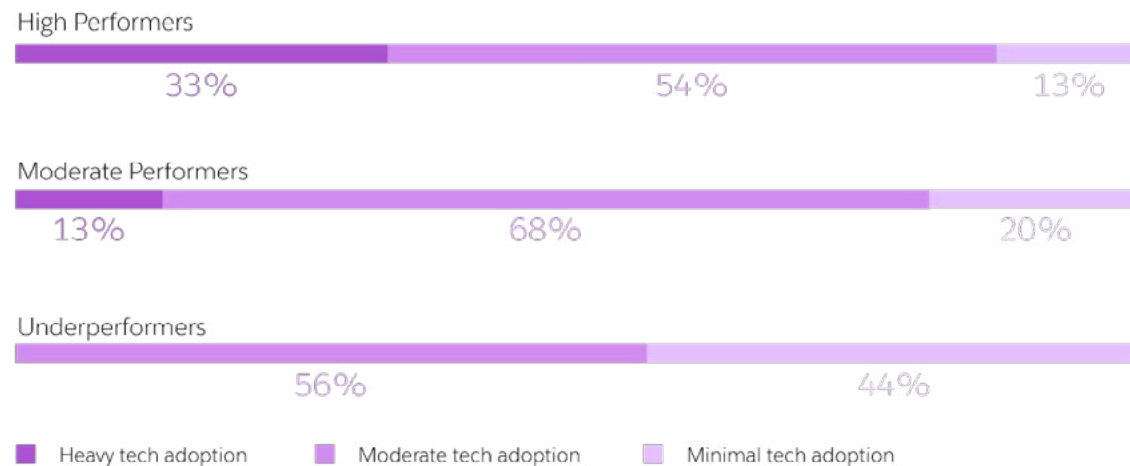
Prepared Agents Equal Customer Success

Are you arming your agents with all of the things they need to deliver world-class customer service? Agents who can easily access the right information, at the right time have the power to resolve issues quickly, leaving you with happy customers. And the research backs it up: high-performing service teams are **3.4 times more likely** to empower their agents than underperforming teams. A better service experience starts with a better agent experience.

Provide the Right Tech Solutions

Top teams also embrace technology to get the job done. **One-third of high performers** qualify as heavy tech adopters; underperformers are minimal (or, at best, moderate) technology

adopters. Today's robust customer service tools put all the information agents need in a single place. When agent consoles are integrated with CRM (customer relationship management) systems, agents can quickly review a customer's profile and account information, and deliver a personalized experience that separates their business from the competition. Best of all, customers don't have to repeat themselves and agents can anticipate their needs. Giving your agents the right tools empowers them to do their jobs better by delivering faster, "right the first time" results.



Key Takeaways:

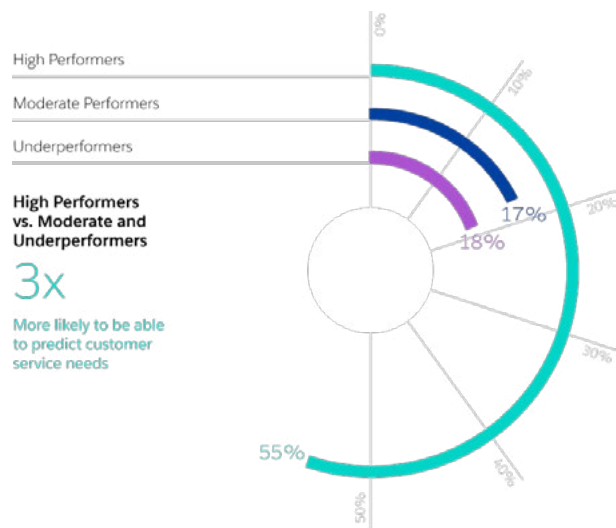
Empowering your service agents leads to better service and happier customers.

- ⊕ Top service companies fully empower their agents to make customers happy.
- ⊕ Giving agents the right tech for the job enables them to resolve issues quickly, leading to better interactions.
- ⊕ Companies report that wearable tech will become a prominent part of service team strategy in the next two years.

Chapter 3

Anticipate Customer Needs

Anticipating customer needs is a difficult thing to execute. Providing world-class service starts with listening, empathizing with, and learning from customers. When combined with smart technology, customer service agents can take a more proactive approach with customers in order to provide highly relevant, personalized experiences that anticipate what a customer really needs.



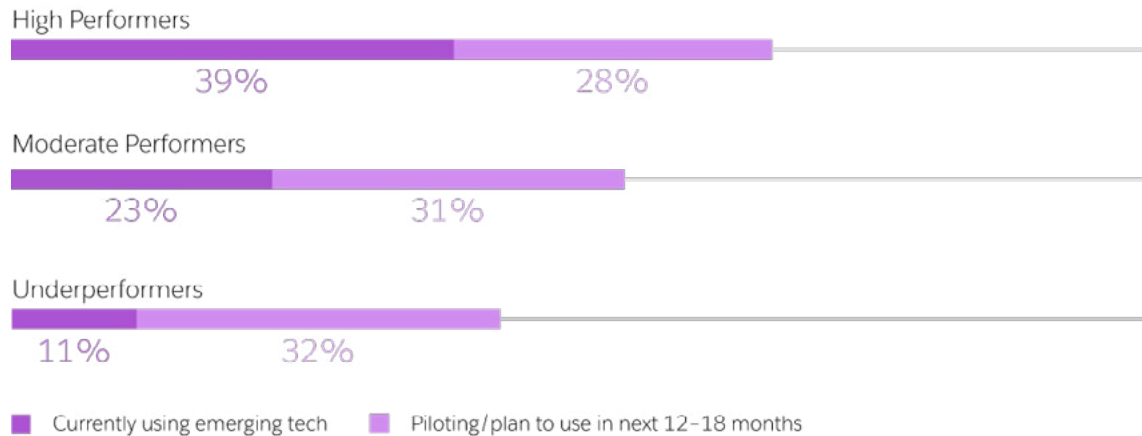
Proactive Customer Service Through Emerging Technologies

According to our research, more service teams are taking advantage of innovative technologies to extract actionable customer insights. For example, service teams are using analytics to understand customer preferences based on previous clicks, purchases, and website searches. The customer's profile can then be matched with the best offers or content for each individual customer. We make these educated predictions automatically, every day, without even realizing it.

If a child really enjoys chocolate cake, it's easy to deduce that he/she might also enjoy chocolate ice cream (OK, who doesn't?). Similarly, emerging predictive intelligence technology promises to help service teams anticipate customer behavior

and sentiment. Service agents can adopt a proactive approach by efficiently routing calls to service agents familiar with a case history, or to better-informed technical specialists.

High-performing teams are **3.6 times more likely** to make use of smart technologies like predictive analytics to help inform their decisions within the service organization. Compared to underperforming teams, strong teams are **three times more likely to excel** at using and reading analytics. Using data, they create customized dashboards, track performance metrics in real time, and make improvements to weak spots.



Key Takeaways:

Proactive service, enabled by smart technology, is growing.

- ⊕ Smart technology is enabling smarter, proactive customer service.
- ⊕ Predictive intelligence helps service teams understand the behavior and anticipate customer needs.
- ⊕ Teams that are strong in analytics benefit from gleaning actionable insights.

Chapter 4

Offer Self-Service Options

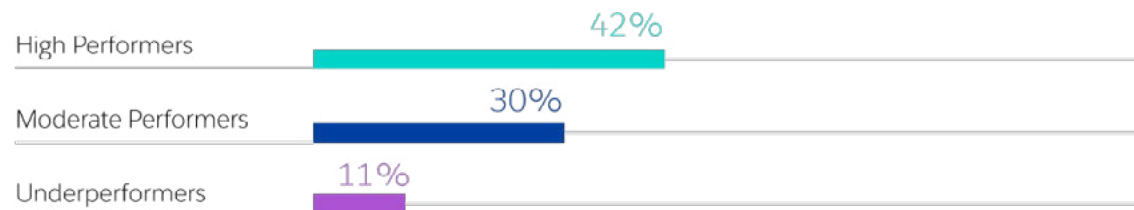
One of the great benefits of the digital age is that every customer has the power to help herself. Think about how you solve problems at home or at work: if you can't remember something or want to figure out how to accomplish a simple task, odds are, you'll Google it. The best customer service teams understand that people bring this same do-it-yourself mindset to customer service. Many customers would rather search for answers in a community or on a FAQ page than pick up the phone – so why not enable them to do so?



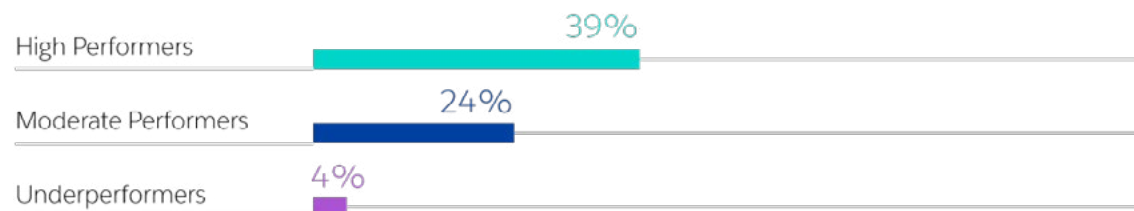
Why Create Self-Service Communities?

High-performing teams work to make the correct information and solutions available via a FAQ page or other self-service offering to help customers help themselves. The benefits are simple: customers can find the information they need with minimal effort, and service agents can spend more time with complex cases rather than providing the same simple information again and again. Top teams are four times more likely to maintain a self-service community than underperformers, giving them the edge on efficient service.

Self-Service Portals: Percentage Currently Using



Community Creation and Management: Percentage Currently Using



The Power of Customer Communities

Customer communities are another resource that top teams take advantage of. Communities harness the power of collaboration and crowdsourced knowledge to help customers resolve issues on their own. Customers can search for answers in a message forum, or ask a question directly via a discussion board. The best service teams are 11 times more likely to create and manage communities than underperforming teams.

Key Takeaways:

Providing self-service options is key to service success.

- ⊕ Customers want the option to solve their own problems before contacting customer service.
- ⊕ Self-service portals empower customers to find the information they need with minimal effort, and they also free up agents to spend more time on complex issues.
- ⊕ Businesses that build and cultivate communities can tap into a collaborative ecosystem that shares knowledge, answers questions, and fosters engagement.

Conclusion

It doesn't matter how they contact you – your customers expect a service experience that is smarter, personalized, and requires minimal effort. High-performing teams are excelling in meeting customers where they are, empowering their service agents with the right tools, anticipating their customers' needs with proactive service, and helping customers help themselves. By investing in your own people, using the right technology, and offering your customers more options, you can deliver the exceptional service that separates you from the competition.

To learn more about how the best customer service teams are staying ahead of the game, read the full [“2015 State of Service” report](#).



Service solutions that drive agent productivity and customer satisfaction

Delivering amazing customer service means being faster, smarter, and more personalized than ever. Connect with your customers in entirely new ways with the right technology powering your service department.

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48% Faster case resolution time.

47% Increase in agent productivity

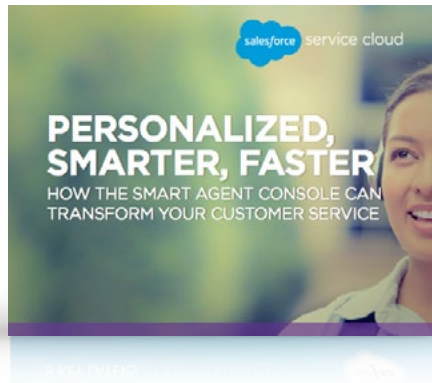
45% Decrease in case resolution times



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