# Five things you can do now to create better retail CX

After a holiday season that was challenged by excess inventory, supply chain issues and staffing shortages, retailers are taking stock of last year's sales—and looking for ways to improve the outlook for 2023.

While the economy is showing some signs of improvement, shoppers may still be a bit skittish after a rocky year. But even in this challenging economic environment, retailers who provide a great experience for their customers can still enjoy an increase in sales. Here's what you need to know.

**zendesk**

# 01

# Develop your
# CX strategy as an
# integrated approach

According to [Zendesk's CX Trends 2022](#) report, customer service has emerged as a key differentiator amongst retailers. And customer expectations have increased over the past year—61% of shoppers say that they would switch to a competitor after just one bad experience.

After almost three years of lockdowns, American shoppers have drastically changed their shopping habits. With most non-essential brick-and-mortar stores shuttered during the first few months of the pandemic, customers got more comfortable with ecommerce shopping and contactless store pickup.

This [digital transformation](#) has permanently changed the way Americans shop. Customers are returning to physical stores—but they may not always be buying. Instead, they might try on clothes or test out furniture, and then complete their purchase online. Shoppers have also discovered that they love to browse online, purchase their item, and then pick up in-store (BOPIS).



Shoppers are also interacting with brands more than ever—sharing their experiences on social media, having conversations over messaging apps, and connecting over phone and email. And this transformation of shopping habits happened quickly. Forrester found that over the last year, [more than 50% of total US retail sales](#) came through digital channels.

With the shift to online commerce, retailers have found new ways to serve their customers in a digital world. Creating a seamless CX experience across physical and digital channels is essential. But even as retailers adapt, there's still room to [improve the customer experience online.](#) And retailers that successfully integrate superior CX in their overall sales strategy will succeed this holiday season—and in the years to come.

# 02

# Focus on customer loyalty and retention

In a challenging economic environment, a customer who believes—and advocates—for a brand is one of the surest ways to keep carts full and cash registers ringing. And loyal customers are likely to share their positive experiences with a brand—they'll tell friends and family, post on social media, and leave good reviews on various web sites and apps.

It's proven that CX agents play a vital role in customer retention. And Zendesk's CX Trends 2022 report found that 83% of retail business leaders agree—but just a third of retail agents feel empowered to do their jobs well. When agents have the right training, tools, and flexibility—they'll deliver a better experience for customers. Developing strategies to build customer loyalty can help businesses forge meaningful relationships with customers—and help improve the bottom line.
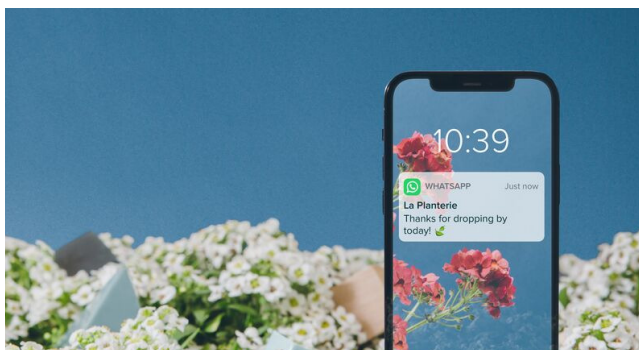
**90%** **Loyal customers spend more** 90% of customers will spend more with companies that personalize customer service.
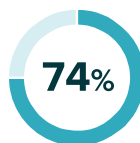
**74%** **Loyal customers are less likely to churn** 74% of customers say they will forgive a company for its mistake after receiving excellent service.

**81%** **Loyal customers improve customer retention rate** 81% of customers say a positive customer service experience increases the likelihood they'll make another purchase.

**64%** **Loyal customers are more likely to recommend your business to a friend** 64% of business leaders say that customer service has a positive impact on their company's growth.

# 03

# Invest in self-service customer experience

Customers love self-service CX options because they can get answers to their questions 24/7 without having to wait to speak with an agent. According to Zendesk's CX Trends 2022, 70% of customers expect a company to have a self-service portal or content available to them.

But retailers need to invest in a robust knowledge base if they want their customers to rely on self-service options for their inquiries. Spending time developing a dynamic online library can prove to be a valuable resource for both customers and agents. It can also be profitable: according to Gartner, customer support costs can be reduced by 25%—or more—when retailers have strong knowledge management discipline.

**Other benefits include:**
- **35% reduction in time it takes to train new agents**
- **40% reduction in inbound emails and 8% reduction in support calls**
- **25% headcount shift away from low-value calls to high-value customer interactions**
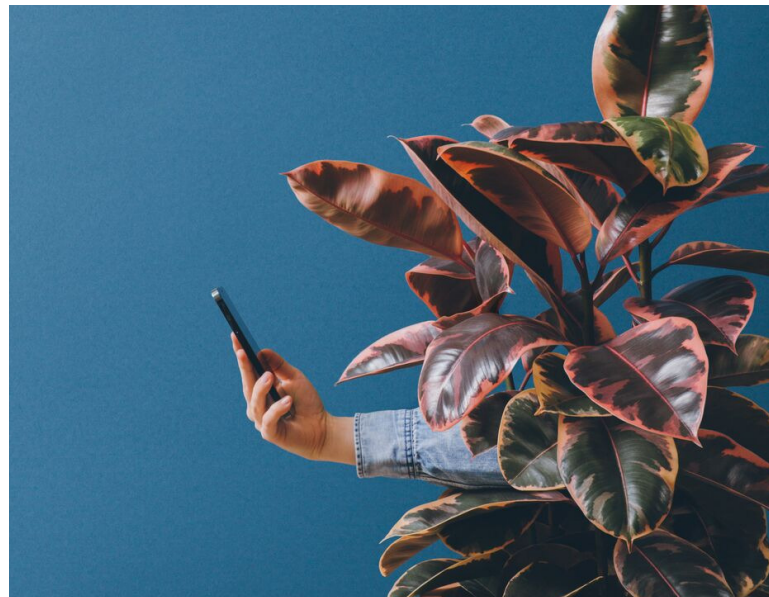
Knowledge management isn't always a top priority for retailers. But when companies invest in creating dynamic knowledge centers, customers get faster answers to their questions. Agents have more context around customer issues, and can update knowledge center articles to keep them fresh and accurate. And, retailers can start to see trends in consumer behavior they might have missed otherwise.

# 04

# Improve contextual knowledge to employees and customers

If customers find it difficult to navigate your help center, they may give up and move on to one of your competitors. Customers want simple, straightforward answers to their questions. And agents will be better able to serve customers if they can find answers quickly.
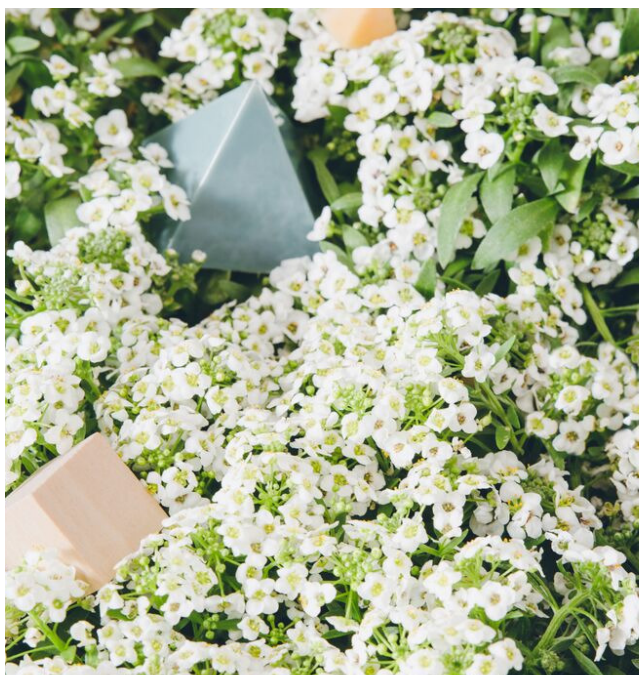
**Help centers are evolving, and with the rise of remote work— these trends are emerging:**

Technology that's easily accessible for CX agents, whether they work from home or at the office.

Rigorous maintenance of AI systems, with regular updates and improvements to knowledge base.

Integration of help centers with other analytic and customer service tools.

# 05

# Self-service and assisted support work better together

With all of the advances in artificial intelligence (AI), some CX agents may question if they'll eventually be replaced by bots. But customers still need a human touch—and AI can actually help live agents deliver better service.



AI-powered CX tools help both customers and agents get speedy answers to common questions. Instead of waiting on hold for a representative, or repeatedly clicking "refresh" on their email to find out what happened to their order—shoppers can ask an AI bot to quickly find out the status of their purchase. This way, CX agents can devote more time to customers with trickier issues—a win-win for everyone.

- **AI can diminish the low-value inquiries**
  With an automation-first approach, live agents get to use their empathy, critical thinking, and creativity on customer problems that matter—and deflect the rest.

- **AI can provide better context before the inquiry even reaches an agent**
  AI-powered tools can gather customer information upfront, so if a ticket needs to be escalated to a live agent, that agent will have the context for the inquiry at their fingertips—and customers don't have to repeat themselves. AI bots can also help to identify customer intent and guide CX agents with recommendations on next steps—making the process smoother and more personalized.

- **Automation frees agents to have more meaningful interactions with higher-value customers**
  AI allows companies to streamline their operations by automating triage, organizing conversations by intent, and increasing visibility on where to prioritize. This way, retailers have the chance to see trends in customer behavior—and adjust their responses in real time.

*Make a New Year's resolution to provide the best CX ever! Here's how to rev up your sales in 2023.*