

TRAVEL ARTICLE

Millennials vs Boomers

Are You With The Beatles or the Bieber?

Generations of Customers

Whether you were born in the age of The Beatles or the Bieber, the technology you use to communicate on a daily basis may differ greatly from your other-generational counterpart. Technology advancements present new ways to make our lives easier, but the rate at which technology is developing has made it impossible for anyone to embrace all of it. Additionally, older generations are more reluctant to change their ways just because new technology claims it can make things “easier”. The accelerating rate at which new technology is introduced to the public has created a divide between how different generations prefer to communicate – and not just with their friends and family.

*“I use to be ‘it’, but then they changed what ‘it’ was.
Now what I’m with isn’t ‘it’, and what’s ‘it’ seems weird
and scary to me. It happened to me, it’ll happen to you!”
- Grandpa Simpson, The Simpsons*

So who are these infamously opposed generations? Millennials, those born between 1980 and 1994 have penetrated the workforce, and their increases in income has resulted in \$200 billion in annual buying power. This generation continues to grow at an alarming rate, becoming the biggest generation in the workforce for the first time in 2016. Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, may have been surpassed in numbers by millennials this year, but they still dominate the market with \$2.3 trillion in spending power. It’s clear that not providing either of these groups with their preferred customer experience will be at the peril of travel providers.

Giving Customers What They Want

Despite generational differences, there is one thing that all customers can agree on regardless of age: customers want the most effortless experience possible. Whether it’s trying to receive customer support, find the right item to purchase, or simply finding information about the organization, the less effort a customer has to take to reach their goal, the more loyalty you will drive from that customer.

It’s important for travel providers to know not only what technologies their customers are using to communicate, but all of their preferences when it comes to engaging with your business. This enables companies to tailor their customer experience strategy to each customer.

But are millennials and boomers as different as we think? This article highlights some of the top similarities and differences between millennials and boomers when it comes to providing customer service and support, and what steps your organization can take to make sure you’re providing the best customer experiences possible for customers of all ages.



25% of customers would go so far as to not make a purchase if a brand didn’t offer their ideal method of interaction with customer service.”

Salesforce, 2015

Where They Agree

Millennials and Boomers Like to Self-Serve

Millennials grew up navigating digital menus to find the information they need, and they get frustrated if they aren't able to find the information they need on their own. Boomers may have more patience, but attempting to use self-service tools on a company's website is still the #1 method for getting support amongst all generations. Improve the customer experience for millennials and boomers by providing a comprehensive database of information on your website. Utilize customer self-service tools like virtual agents. Travel providers will also benefit from this strategy with cost-savings. Customers that don't have to reach out to a voice agent are much less expensive to support.

*To make self-service even easier, add a chatbot to your website.
Chatbots provide instant, accurate answers to customer questions.
They're a great way to help struggling customers find the
information they need.*

Find out more about chatbots in our latest eBook, [“Your Best Agent Is A Chatbot”](#)

Millennials and Boomers Use Multiple Devices and Channels

It's no surprise that millennials are on multiple channels and devices simultaneously, but many may not be aware that boomers are much more tech savvy than you expect. 91% of boomers use one or more social media sites.¹ For 58% of these social boomers, the top action taken after use a social networking site was to visit a company website.¹ Your company's digital properties should be able to track customers as they swap between devices or platforms.

A comprehensive tagging strategy lets your organization know if a customer came from an ad, a Google search, a LinkedIn ad, a marketing link, etc. Knowing where your customer came from is the first step to knowing why your customers came to your site, which can help provide an expedited journey to their desired goal. If you've incorporated a chatbot onto your website, make sure it can interact with your data. These are known as smart or intelligent chatbots, and they are able to provide personalized service unique to the customer. The goal is to resolve customer issues and, if your chatbot or agent has no idea who the customer is or why they're on your site, they aren't going to be very helpful with resolving the issue.

Summary of Similarities

When providing customer service and support to millennials and boomers, develop a strategy that puts a priority on self-service. Additional success will be found in providing a comprehensive tagging strategy that lets customers engage across multiple devices and platforms. When customer preferences overlap, finding a way to appease all audiences is relatively straightforward, but customer preferences don't always overlap.

¹ <https://www.dmn3.com/dmn3-blog boomers-and-social-media>



By 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationship with the enterprise without interacting with a human.”

Gartner Predicts, 2016



34% of millennial customers say they would rather get their teeth cleaned than call in to a customer service support line.”

Salesforce, 2015

Where They Disagree

Millennials are Not a Fan of Calling a Rep

For Millennials, the days of face-to-face communication are over. Chat is the preferred channel of support for millennials. The preference for chat continues to grow as digital, text-based communication becomes more commonplace. Whether it's chatting on a website or social media, everything needs to be instant and responsive. 67% of customers expect the fastest support response to come via chat.²

Additionally, all travel providers should have the ability for customers to be authenticated via messaging/web. Having to push customers over to a voice channel just to be authenticated created a disjointed experience for the company. The entire experience needs to be stitched together and seamless.

Having chat is only step one. Your contact center can't just take 40% of their voice agents and put them on chat. Your best phone reps are not your best chat reps. Hiring and training need to evolve too. Who you choose to hire for your chat center is very important. Fortunately, as newer generations enter the workforce, companies have a wealth of potential candidates that primarily communicate by typing to each other, which gives you a great workforce to pull from.

Boomers Still Prefer to Call

Despite the huge push towards chat as the channel of choice for millennials, adoption has been much slower for older generations. 35% of boomers still say that phone is their preferred method of interacting with customer service. But phone support is far from perfect, even for boomers. A shocking 80% of customers consider customer service over the phone to be inconvenient.²

Traditional phone support suffers from being very limited, especially when it comes to providing customer support, but it doesn't have to be. Rather than just telling customers what to do, you can augment your phone support to show them as well. With [24]7 Active Share, customers who have called in to a voice agent can be sent web links that enable them to view a list of options, instructions, or any other information relevant to the call. [See Active Share in action by clicking here.](http://webassets.desk.com/static/ebooks/desk-customer-service-across-generational-divide-report.pdf)

² <http://webassets.desk.com/static/ebooks/desk-customer-service-across-generational-divide-report.pdf>

1,000,000,000+

the number of messages sent between people and businesses each month on Facebook Messenger

Millennials Don't Want to Wait

Millennials are infamous for being a time poor generation. They've grown up with information at their fingertips, and stiff competition amongst travel providers to provide the fastest, most effortless experience possible. These "kings of customer experience" are constantly raising the bar of customer expectations with time-saving offers like one-click purchasing, same day delivery, or 24x7 on-demand chat service. 25% of millennials expect a response within 10 minutes after reaching out.


One of the easiest ways to accommodate these high consumer expectations begins with a unified messaging strategy. If all of your customer-facing touchpoints are pulling from the same database of information, you're guaranteed to get customers the right answer the first time. A sure-fire way to lose customer loyalty is to provide them one answer on social media, and then an entirely different answer when they're chatting with an agent on your website.

If one side of your live agents manage the Facebook messenger app, and an entirely different department manages chat on the website, it creates a disjointed experience for customers because different departments will give different answers to customer questions. A unified social customer care strategy is crucial for providing quick, correct answers that millennials expect. This can involve big changes in an organization. Get your C-suite on board with social customer care, and work together to provide a unified solution.

Boomers Want You to Go at Their Speed

Boomers want customer support to be easy. If customer service is about ensuring satisfaction, it requires patience when assisting boomers. Your metrics shouldn't be about getting customers off the phone as quickly as possible as much as giving good support.

Your agents should be aware that it may take a bit more time to assist this audience, especially with more technologically complex products or services. You can help prepare for these experiences with comprehensive tools like virtual agents, which are great for providing an option for customers to ask a question in natural language. Boomers may not know the exact terminology or jargon for your device, and that shouldn't hinder them from getting a correct answer. With natural language processing (NLP) virtual agents, customers can ask questions like "how do you make the red light thingy stop blinking". A typical search engine would not pick up the article "how to turn off notifications", but a virtual agent would.



A Major Global Bank implemented a Virtual Agent and experienced:

50% reduction in email volume from their website at launch.

25% reduction in phone calls.

Over one million questions answered with 91 percent accuracy.

Summary of Differences

As you can see there are some clear differences between millennials and boomers when it comes to customer experience preferences. Fortunately, there are many solutions or options for developing a customer experience strategy that provides every customer, regardless of age, with the type of assistance they prefer. At the end of the day, there is one overarching similarity between these two groups that needs to be the top priority for your travel organization.

Everyone Demands Authenticity

Boomers don't want impersonal customer care, and millennials know exactly when an agent is reading or typing directly from a script. Every customer is much more receptive to brands they feel provide an authentic experience. When training your call center agents, provide flexible training that enables them the option to provide a humanized experience. Scrap those generic call scripts and replace them with honest recommendations.

Recognize that AHT isn't everything. Take the time when you have to. Develop a strategy with a right-channel solution based on the customer profile. The digital world has rewarded us with rich, visual data of every customer, and it needs to be used to optimize customer support and service.

Your metrics shouldn't always be about getting customers off the phone as quick as possible, especially for the boomer generation. Travel providers need to take a step back from that cost-cutting mode that's been used for 30 years. As call volumes start to normalize, companies need to ask themselves, "how can we leverage all of the medium's available to us today to get across a succinct messaging strategy and grow our brand". Technology continues to provide new options for improving the customer experience. Even boomers are impressed when companies can use digital technology to help them in new ways. They want to try new technology, but it can feel intimidating if not explained properly.

A focus on customer experience based on a demographic approach to customers may seem like a small priority, but companies are quickly learning that it's a quick way to lose customers. By the third bad experience, 82% of customers will stop purchasing from a company. 25% leave after one bad experience. If you don't provide top-notch customer service, and constantly look for ways to enhance and change the customer experience, loyalty is put aside and your customers move on to your competitors.

It's time to make customer experience a top priority, for every customer, regardless of their generation.

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achieve extraordinary results.
Contact us today.**

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About [24]7

[24]7 is redefining customer acquisition and engagement by making consumer intent the cornerstone of digital transformation. With intent-driven engagement, companies anticipate and act on consumer intent across any channel, collapsing the time to deliver successful outcomes in the moments that matter most.

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