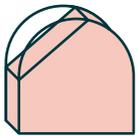## CX TRENDS 2021: INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Retail

Retailers experienced extreme volatility this year, evidenced in the lightning-fast changes in how customers shopped, how employees worked, and, ultimately, how companies did business.
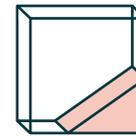
In Zendesk's third-annual Customer Experience Trends Report, retailers reported major disruption to the way they work:

84% implemented new tools or processes
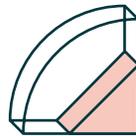
44% manage remote staff

37% had to lay off employees

That's a lot to handle at once. And retailers are managing all that while also seeing a 38% increase in customer engagement, more than any other surveyed industry. No wonder 68% of agents report feeling overwhelmed.

Meeting customer expectations is hard right now. This year's report reveals five trends that are helping customer experience (CX) leaders set a high bar.

TREND 01

Spotlight on CX

This year, CX moved mostly online, with retailers facilitating contactless pickup, streamlining return processes, and more. But while in-person interactions decreased, the importance of providing meaningful customer interactions remained.

69% of retailers said they care more about CX this year than last.

In the online world, that means providing a consistent, personalized experience to customers across channels.

> Retailers with the happiest customers are 2.3 times as likely to have invested in omnichannel communication.

TREND 02

A more conversational world

Good CX requires meeting customers where they are. But where they are changes—64% say they've tried new channels in 2020. Most retailers are working to keep up, with 74% reporting that they've looked for new ways to engage customers. By and large, customers are on messaging channels.

Retailers saw a 24% increase in support requests come in over WhatsApp, and 37% who added a new channel turned to social messaging. Engaging with customers this way is working.

> Retailers with the best CX track records are 1.4 times more likely to be messaging with their customers.

Emphasis on agility

The ability to adapt quickly has long been a useful business skill, but 2020 upped the stakes.

65%
of retailers are looking to improve agility

by using blended agents, workflow management tools, and AI.

> Retailers with the highest CX performance metrics are 1.8 times more likely to use workflow management tools.

The future of work is now

Retailers are reevaluating how their support teams support customers: 46% have announced formal work-from-home plans for their agents. But only 47% of agents feel like they have the right tools in place, while 51% of CX Managers lack the means to measure success in their current setup.

Luckily, 58% of support teams at retail companies now have access to developers, which means they can customize their support solutions to help teams work smarter.

> Indeed, retailers with the fastest resolution times and the highest customer satisfaction are 1.5 times more likely to use developer tools.

The digital tipping point

The shift to digital has been a long time coming, but its importance accelerated this year. Retailers that were previously slow to transition face a greater urgency to speed up timelines. But only some have the money for it.

> 33% faced budget decreases for CX in 2020, compared to 32% that saw budgets increase.

2021 looks more promising though.

50%
anticipate having more budget to invest in CX technology in 2021.

To get a bigger picture of the state of CX in 2021 **check out the full CX Trends report.**

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