CX AND THE CONSUMER:

Pitfalls and Possibilities

Customer Research Survey Report
2023

interactions

Customer experience (CX) has become increasingly critical in fostering strong, lasting connections with consumers in today's competitive business environment.

To gauge current consumer sentiment over the state of CX, Interactions conducted a survey of 1,000 consumers in the United States in March 2023.

"CX and the Consumer: Pitfalls and Possibilities" reveals the unfortunate reality that most companies fall short of meeting customer expectations, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction.
The survey results show how crucial it is for organizations to address these shortcomings and explore opportunities for improvement.

The Untapped Potential of Customer Service

The survey results emphasize the substantial potential of customer service in generating customer loyalty:

98%

of consumers say excellent customer experiences make them feel like valued customers.

96%

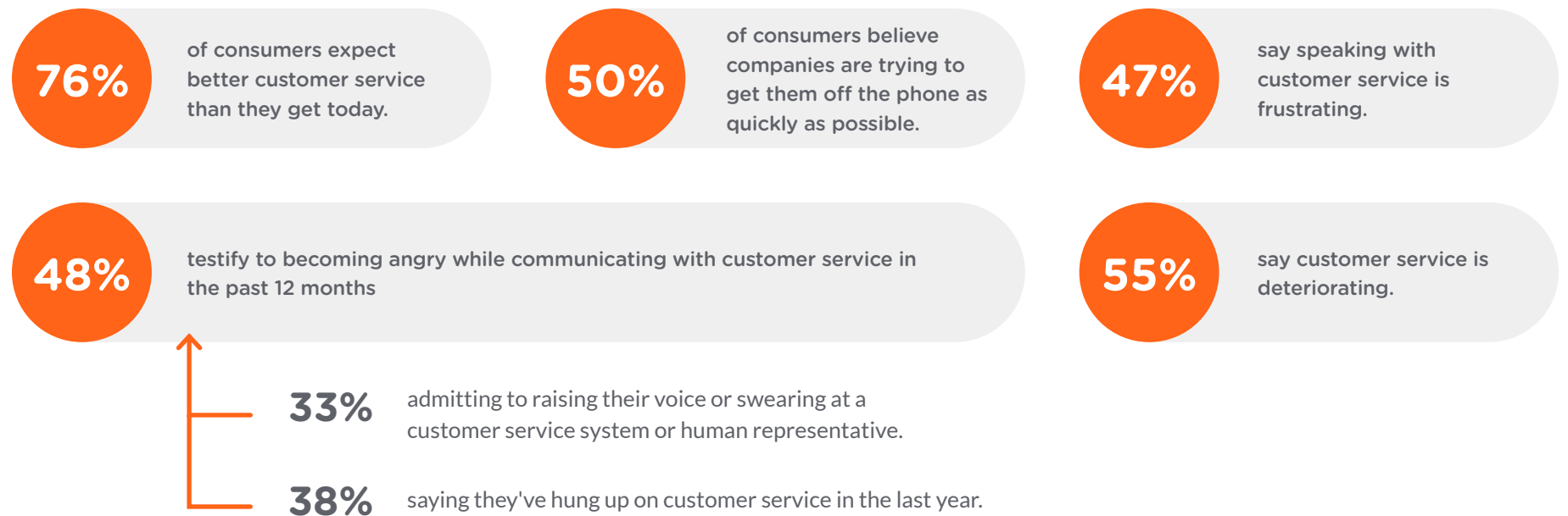say they will be more loyal to a company that provides excellent customer service.

These figures indicate that companies can leverage excellent customer service as a powerful tool to foster lasting relationships with their customers, ultimately contributing to increased loyalty and business growth.
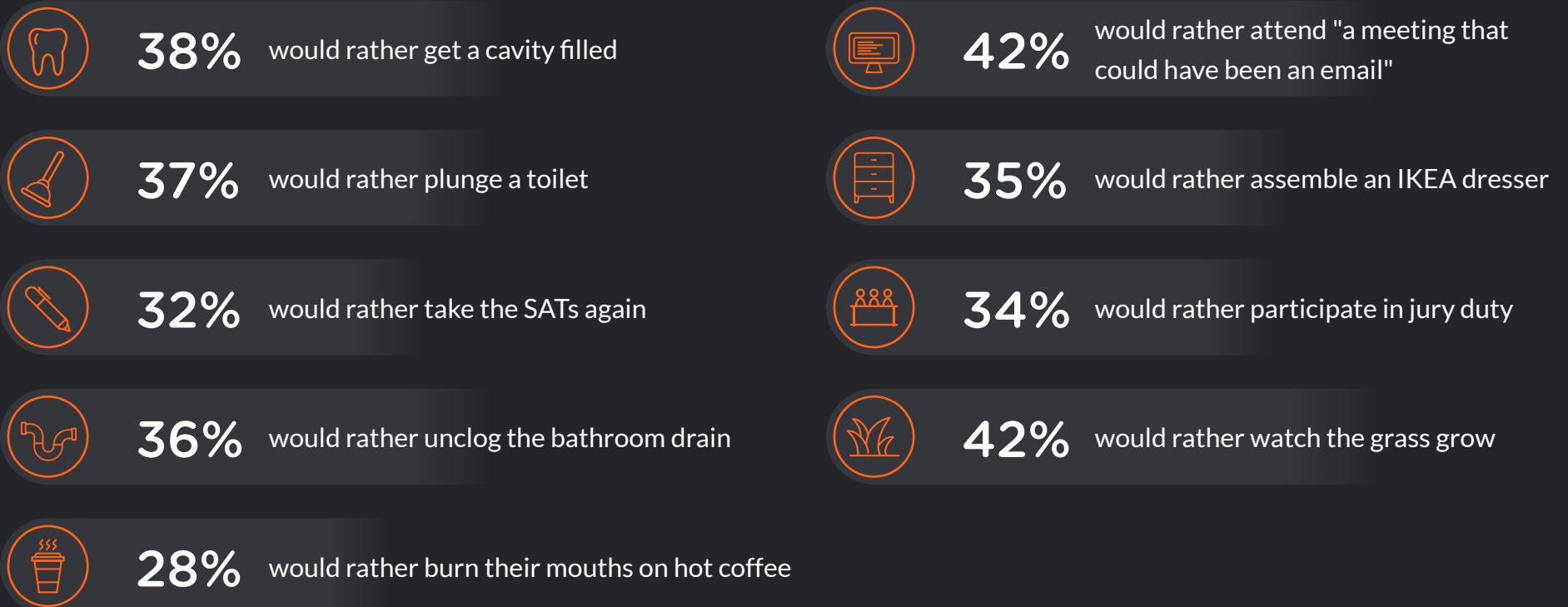
The State of Customer Service Today

Regrettably, the survey demonstrates that companies are predominantly failing to meet consumer expectations:

76% of consumers expect better customer service than they get today.

50% of consumers believe companies are trying to get them off the phone as quickly as possible.

47% say speaking with customer service is frustrating.

48% testify to becoming angry while communicating with customer service in the past 12 months

55% say customer service is deteriorating.

33% admitting to raising their voice or swearing at a customer service system or human representative.

38% saying they've hung up on customer service in the last year.

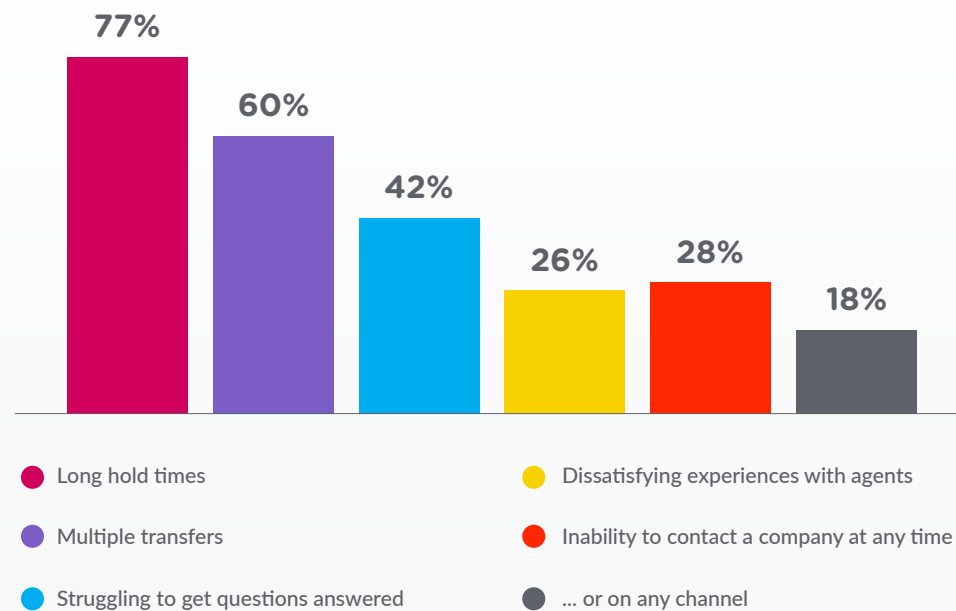# The Daunting Task of Contacting Customer Service

The survey also reveals that consumers perceive contacting customer service as an unpleasant and daunting experience. Many respondents would prefer to engage in various undesirable activities than deal with customer service.

38% would rather get a cavity filled

37% would rather plunge a toilet

32% would rather take the SATs again

36% would rather unclog the bathroom drain

28% would rather burn their mouths on hot coffee

42% would rather attend "a meeting that could have been an email"

35% would rather assemble an IKEA dresser

34% would rather participate in jury duty

42% would rather watch the grass grow

Consumer Expectations and Frustrations

Consumers identified the following concerns when asked about their expectations and frustrations:

Bar chart values:
- 77%
- 60%
- 42%
- 26%
- 28%
- 18%

Legend:
- Long hold times
- Multiple transfers
- Struggling to get questions answered
- Dissatisfying experiences with agents
- Inability to contact a company at any time
- ... or on any channel

These concerns reveal specific areas where companies can focus their improvement efforts to enhance the overall customer service experience.

The Promising Role of CX Technology

Despite the prevailing issues in customer service, modern CX technology offers promising solutions:
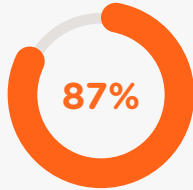
87%

of respondents love when they can quickly resolve their questions and concerns using CX technology.

65%

like it when they can reach the right department on their first try.

Customers also like reaching a company on any channel they want (49%), speak in "natural language" (49%), and leave the interaction feeling like the company cares about their experience and values their business (49%).

However, not all technology is equally effective:

36%

of consumers say that dealing with ineffective CX technology drives them crazy, particularly when they have to engage in unnatural "robot-speak" to get customer service technology to understand them (36%).
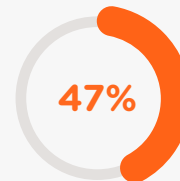
47%

Nearly half (47%) point to situations when they must repeat themselves to technology that can't understand them.

Balancing Technology and Human Interaction

The survey results emphasize the importance of balancing technology and human interaction in customer service:

69% of consumers value having tech-driven customer support options, such as virtual assistants, chat, and chatbots.

36% say being unable to speak to a person when they have a complex issue drives them crazy, highlighting the need for human assistance in certain situations.

57% say those options have helped them efficiently resolve a question or problem in the past year.

53% More than half (53%) of respondents love it when they can bypass restrictive dial menus, further emphasizing the need for a seamless and efficient customer service experience.

Implications for CX Professionals

These findings surface several implications for companies seeking to improve their customer service and capitalize on the potential for increased customer loyalty:

INVEST IN EFFECTIVE CX TECHNOLOGY

Companies should invest in advanced, user-friendly CX technology that helps consumers quickly resolve their questions and concerns.

BLEND TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN INTERACTION

While technology plays an increasingly crucial role in streamlining customer service, blending tech-driven support options and human interaction is essential, such as ensuring customers can access human representatives to resolve complex issues.

OFFER OPTICHANNEL SUPPORT

Consumers expect to contact companies when they choose through their preferred channels. By offering optichannel support, businesses can cater to varying customer preferences and provide a more convenient and accessible service experience.

FOSTER A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC CULTURE

Companies should strive to create a culture that prioritizes customer service and values each customer's experience. This approach will encourage employees to go above and beyond to deliver exceptional service, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

ADDRESS KEY CONCERNS

Businesses can alleviate consumer frustration and foster loyalty by tackling top concerns such as long hold times, multiple transfers, and difficulties in getting questions answered. Focusing on these areas demonstrates a commitment to improving the customer experience.

With a strategic focus on addressing consumer frustrations and leveraging the benefits of CX technology, organizations can transform their customer service capabilities, positioning themselves as CX industry leaders.

"CX and the Consumer: Pitfalls and Possibilities" was conducted through Cint in March 2023. Data was collected from a pool of 1,000 adult consumers in the United States.

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