

Connect like *humans* do:

Building customer communications that matter



infobip

Introduction

Overwhelming digitization means businesses need to up their emotional quotient and go back to basics of customer communications – the human connection.

Customers have reshaped the way they communicate, forcing businesses to go back to the drawing board and rethink their messaging strategies. The pandemic, coupled with lockdowns around the world, has made customers seek contactless human interactions, resulting in an increased usage of digital channels – be it chat apps, email, SMS or

video calls. Digital channels have also taken over as the primary interface of your company, replacing the friendly face of in-person staff - leading to the need for personalized, omnichannel customer engagement.

Getting there can be just as challenging as it seems. In fact, 74% of customers find business messaging lacks a personalized, human connection. Missing that human touch can alienate more than half of your customer base, with 54% of surveyed customers saying impersonal, generic messaging annoys them.

Amidst the fast pace of digital transformation, the emotional connection with customers may have gotten lost.



54%

of consumers say receiving **impersonal messages** annoys them



47%

ignore impersonalized messages



74%

aren't receiving **personalized comms** from brands

We surveyed **6,000** customers to understand what they desire in brand communication, and how the challenges of 2020 influenced their perspective.

This report will show you how customer-centric omnichannel engagement is critical for generating business growth and build lasting relationships. So, how do you rise to the challenge of making every **moment** count?

Looking at the key traits people look for in their relationships with their favorite brands, we discuss:

1. The key pandemic craving? Interaction

Learning communication lessons from the lockdown

2. Finding the right fit for every customer

Why a one-size approach doesn't fit all

3. Age is more than just a number

Pinpointing personalities and preferences in every age group

4. Making omnichannel matter more than ever

Rethinking the right channel for the right audience

5. Tuning in to the right channel

Why brands must learn the right moment to change channels

The key pandemic craving? Interaction

Learning communication lessons from the lockdown

For so many people, the last few months have meant constant upheaval. We've had to change where and how we work, who we see, how we shop and even how we educate and learn.

Throughout this time, businesses have had to carefully consider how and when they talk to their customers, and what they say. They know that building lasting connections with customers is critical, and rightly so. **More than half (51%) of people believe that communication has become more important than ever since the pandemic.**

The key lesson learned from the lockdown is that whatever your age and preferred channel of commu-

nication, we all still crave interaction.

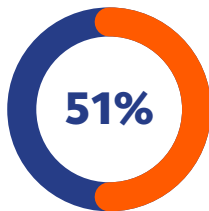
Even for businesses that had already invested in a variety of digital channels, it's essential to make sure their communications are effective across each of them, as one in five (21%) switched brands during lockdown because of the quality of the communications they received. However, the rewards are there for brands that get it right – 30% have become more loyal to at least one new brand since lockdown, with this rising to 38% among Gen Z (those aged 18 – 24).

But what does high-quality communication look like? It is a mix of how relevant, timely and, most importantly, how personal the messages are. It's about reaching people on the right channel, at the right time. You need to show people that you understand them, their preferences and know what they are looking for, to deliver moments that matter.

Personalized interaction = Increased loyalty.



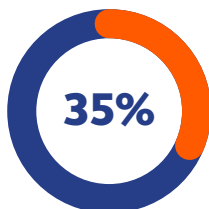
Switched brands due to the quality of communications.



Of people believe that **communication** has become **more important than ever** since the pandemic.



Have become **more loyal to a brand during lockdown.**



Are happier to **engage with brands on digital channels** since the pandemic hit.

Finding the right fit for every customer

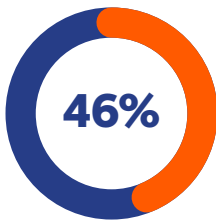
Why a one-size approach doesn't fit all

Working out what's relevant to customers is a constant battle for brands, but it's a must if they want to treat people as individuals, rather than taking a one-size fits all approach. Ultimately, those that understand relevance are best placed to match the right communication, with the right channel, for each and every customer.

That 'right communication' must be one that aligns with people's wants and needs, and contains the

right content. **Thirty-one per cent of people said they were more likely to engage with businesses that understood their desires when it comes to goods and services, while a similar amount (32%) said receiving communications that chime with their personal interests and preferences would have the same effect.**

None of this can happen without the 'right channel' though, which is pivotal if businesses are to succeed.



Agree that technology now plays a greater role in how they engage with brands since the pandemic changed everything.

And these channels aren't simply for execution either – our research showed people were more likely to engage with businesses if they acknowledged their feedback (30%) and didn't overcommunicate (26%) with them, highlighting why businesses need to understand how and when to use each channel.

With communication preferences varying significantly amongst consumers, it is up to businesses to understand their customers, and proactively react to their behavior. To do this, they must take a 'personalized' approach across a variety of different channels based on people's preferences.

Most importantly, this 'personalization' shouldn't just be limited to content – it should also determine the best channel, timing, tone of voice, and message for every interaction. Businesses need to know the key moments when their customers want or are happy to hear from them.

Businesses also need to be mindful that while a lasting, human connection remains the aim, many people see a prospering and reciprocal relationship as transactional. We can see this from the **three things customers said they want to hear about.**

The three things customers want to see from brand communications:



Discounts and sales details (52%)



Information when a new product or service becomes available (35%)



Notifications on transactions and payments (31%)

Businesses also need to know the fine line between getting to know their customers and bombarding them – 31% would be put off by being constantly contacted on a messaging platform by a brand, while a third (34%) wouldn't appreciate sales-focused messages coming via smart home devices.

These findings help focus our understanding that sending the right message on the right channel forms the basis of a successful lasting relationship between businesses and

their customers. And reminds us that the quality of communications is better than quantity.

It's time businesses started thinking about how they combine the right tone, the right message and the right channel. It comes back to responding to people's preferences, rather than sticking to tactics that annoy them, or focusing too much of their communications on channels that might suit the business, but not the customer.

49%

would like brands to message them with relevant messages **at least once a week**

32%

want to receive messages **aligned to their personal interests**

Age is more than just a number

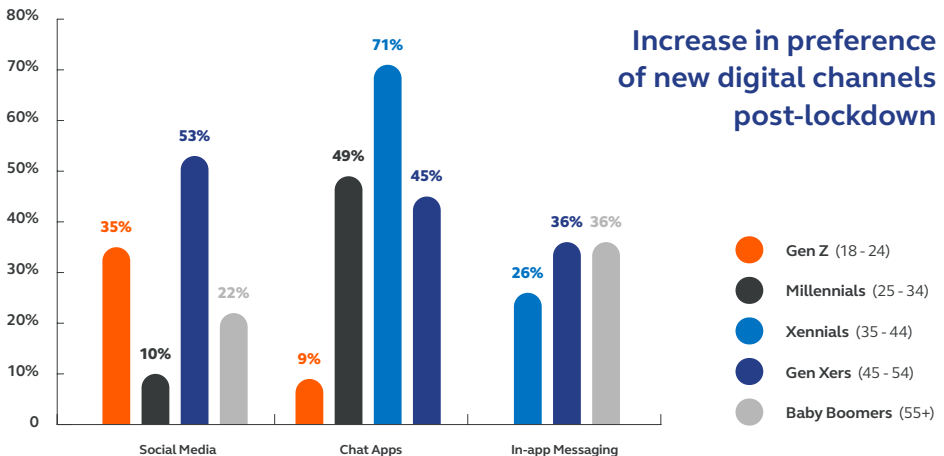
Pinpointing personalities and preferences in every age group

Age is far more than a number used to determine what bucket a customer should fall into. It's a key determining factor in a customer's personality. According to our research, **different age groups express clear but distinctly different preferences on how they want brands to communicate**, and what they don't want.

Gen Z, for example, are more flexible with their preferences and are open to both changing their behavior, and embracing new digital channels, based on their immediate needs. However, businesses must understand their wants, and tailor their communications based on previous interactions. Since the pandemic for example, there's been a **35%**

increase in 18-24s choosing social media as their preferred channel for business communications, along with a 28% increase for texts and a 9% increase in those who prefer to receive messages over WhatsApp and other chat apps. **Millennials (25-34s) too are open to changing how they communicate, and are happiest having more direct interactions with brands via in-app messaging or text**, demonstrating their preference for mobile-first communications. They are increasingly seeking more conversational relationships too, with the pandemic prompting a **49% increase in millennials preferring WhatsApp** for communications from businesses.

49% of millennials prefer using WhatsApp and chat apps as their preferred channel of communication.



Chat apps

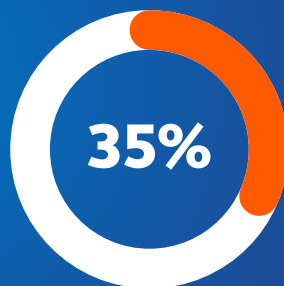
emerged as a key channel for communications during the pandemic, with every age group bar over-55s showing an increasing preference for receiving in-app messaging.

Our research showed that Xennials (35-44s) and Gen Xers (45-54) are also becoming increasingly comfortable with mobile-first communications, although email remains their preferred channel. But the pandemic has made them embrace other channels of communication as well – with a 60% increase in those choosing WhatsApp as their preferred medium across this combined group, and a corresponding 30% rise in those who prefer in-app messaging.

These age groups also showed the greatest desire for businesses to remind them of their customer journey, with both seeking reminders on renewals as one of their top three priorities.

It's important to note, however, that variation exists not only between each of these age groups, but within each of them, too. Our study showed that every customer group is varied: brands must not assume that one size will fit all of those that fall into the 'Millennial' or 'Generation X' bracket, for instance.

This clear transition towards more digitally-led communications will continue gaining momentum. Brands must prioritize an omnichannel strategy that incorporates every applicable channel, allowing them to surprise and delight their customers – and ultimately build a lasting connection.



35% of all people are happier to engage with brands on more digital channels since the pandemic hit.

Making omnichannel matter more than ever

Rethinking the right channel for the right audience

So, what is the right channel? Our research shows that it very much depends – while email came out ahead overall, there was no clear winner. In fact, the results suggest that there isn't a preferred digital channel, with 52% of people not selecting a clear choice.

There were some differences between generations – one third of baby boomers preferred email, falling to one fifth of Gen Z. Eight per cent of younger people preferred social media, versus just two per cent of Generation X. It's clear that there's an increased affinity towards a variety of ways of communicating.

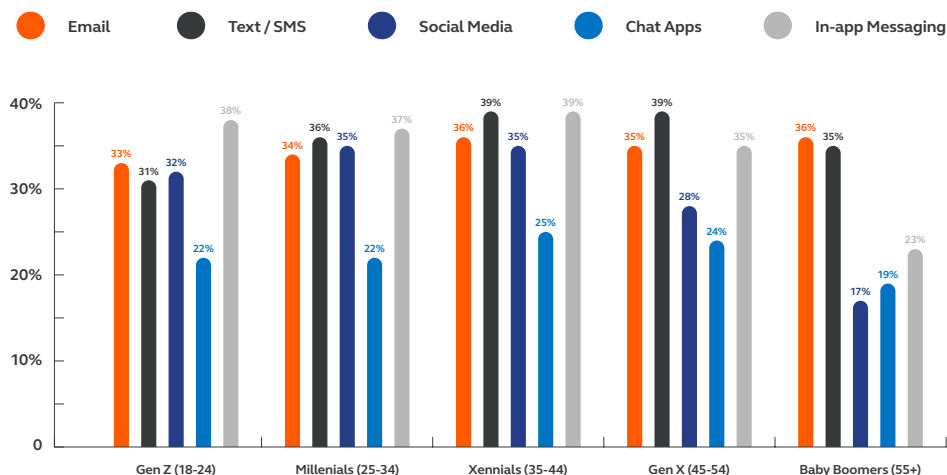
This means businesses that invest in one channel to reach their audience are going to struggle to

connect with people. They need to be looking at how they build a cohesive, consistent approach across a variety of channels. A lack of clear preference also means that there is scope for businesses to experiment. In fact, lockdown has meant more channels are already in play.

The increased affinity for digital and willingness to experiment with different channels shows businesses need to be moving towards a more omnichannel-focused or 'one to multiple' channel approach.

This also means being consistent across all channels to best connect with people and give customers a sense that they're able to have one-to-one chats on their terms. It means really understanding what people want; not what businesses would like them to want.

Omnichannel strategy matters more than ever



Tuning in to the right channel

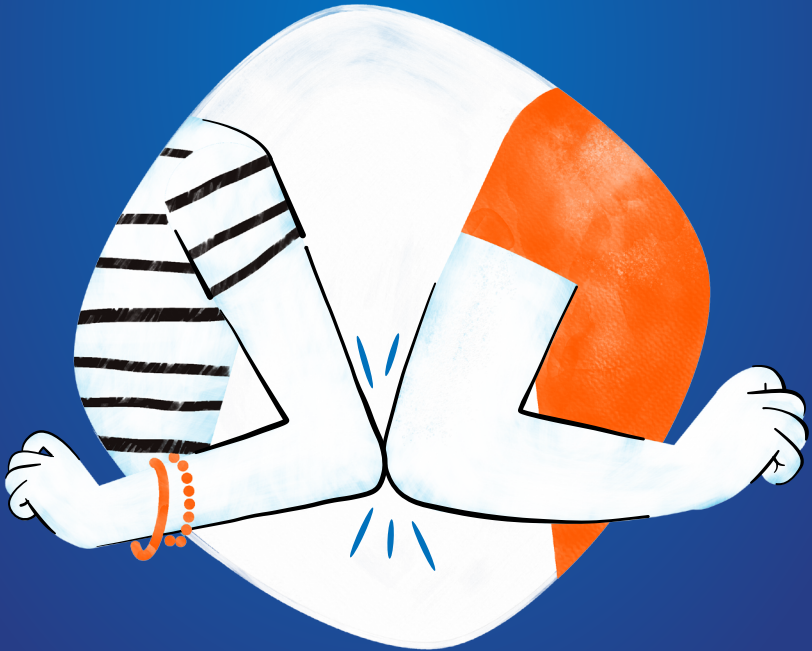
Why brands must learn the right moment to change channels

Our research, combined with recent events, tells us businesses that are relevant, timely and make the effort to be personal – by understanding their customers, and reacting to their behavior proactively – are likely to see better results in the long run. It varies across generations, but ultimately customers want to be valued and treated as individuals.

This pushes businesses to identify the right way to establish and grow connections. Communications need a human touch – they must ask themselves: what channel is right for each interaction I have with my customers? While

it will be different for each company, sector, and communication, at the heart of a lasting relationship is the ability to offer personalized engagement across whatever channel the customer feels is appropriate, in a consistent manner and at the right moment.

This means adopting an omnichannel approach to customer engagement that harnesses the growing acceptance of digital means of communication to reach customers on their terms through one centralized hub.



Introducing Moments - Your Omnichannel Customer Engagement Hub

Moments is an omnichannel customer engagement hub helping businesses better understand their customer, react to their behavior, anticipate their needs and communicate with them how and where they prefer. Moments allows you to unify all your data in one place, and build personalized messaging campaign with smart event-triggered and behavior-based automation- across the channels your customers prefer.

At **Infobip** we are passionate about helping businesses build better relationships. Our solution, and the personalized, contextual omnichannel communications it enables, helps deliver the moments that will allow you to **create long lasting customer relationships to drive results with a human touch.**

Offering a true omnichannel experience through our extensive channel portfolio - WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber and many other chat apps, SMS, Email, RCS, Mobile App Messaging and more.

To find out how we could help you make moments that count for your customers, visit **infobip.com/Products/Moments**

How we found our answers

We commissioned Censuswide to survey 6,048 consumers over the age of 18 in the UK, France and Spain, in July 2020.

The Infobip Advantage



GLOBAL REACH AND LOCAL PRESENCE

- ✔ 600+ direct-to-carrier connections
- ✔ Connect with over 7 billion people and things
- ✔ Strong enterprise client base
- ✔ 60+ offices on 6 continents

Our local presence enables us to react faster and have everyday interactions with our customers, providing solutions in-line with their needs, local requirements and based on proven global best-practices.

SCALABLE, FAST AND FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS

- ✔ Best-in-class delivery rates
- ✔ High speed and reliability
- ✔ Low latency
- ✔ In-house developed platform

Our solutions are created to adapt to the constantly changing market and communication trends at speeds and levels of precision and personalization that only an in-house solution can offer.

REMARKABLE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- ✔ Technical expertise
- ✔ Solutions consultancy
- ✔ Customer success management
- ✔ 24/7 support and network monitoring

We will help you to get up and running in no time, whether it's assisting with integrations, messaging best.

OWN INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✔ Locally available services
- ✔ Compliance to local regulations
- ✔ 28 data centers worldwide

Our worldwide infrastructure easily scales horizontally, leveraging the hybrid cloud model to never run out of resources. Our built-in global compliance engine is constantly updated with the latest in-country regulations and operator requirements.



BEST A2P SMS VENDOR AS RATED BY MNO'S 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020
BEST A2P SMS VENDOR AS RATED BY ENTERPRISES 2019 & 2020
TIER 1 SMS FIREWALL VENDOR 2017, 2018, 2020
TOP 10 INNOVATOR OF 2020



PLATINUM AWARD AS THE GLOBAL CPaaS PROVIDER IN 2020
PLATINUM AWARD AS THE EMEA CPaaS PROVIDER IN THE 2020
PLATINUM AWARD AS THE BEST RCS PROVIDER IN 2020
GOLD AWARD AS THE BEST DIGITAL IDENTITY SOLUTION IN 2020



BEST OTT PARTNERSHIP 2019
BEST MESSAGING INNOVATION - BEST RCS IMPLEMENTATION 2019



BEST MESSAGING API
BEST MESSAGING INNOVATION - CARRIER SOLUTION
BEST ANTI - FRAUD INNOVATION
BEST SMS / A2P PROVIDER FOR THE EMEA REGION

