



Guide
Omnichannel Customer Engagement

Customer engagement for DTC retail

How manufacturers can enhance their direct-to-consumer strategy with AI-powered CX.

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DTC is a lucrative opportunity – if you have the right support infrastructure

Direct-to-consumer (DTC) retail is a lucrative channel for manufacturers who want to boost revenue and connect with the people who love their products. But providing customer support solely via email won't cut it for today's consumers, who are used to retailers delivering personalized, proactive experiences from product selection to after-sales care.

To see true success in DTC, manufacturers need to prioritize customer experience from the first day of planning.

In this guide, we'll outline how you can use Nuance's diverse suite of solutions to create everything from a simple FAQ chatbot all the way up to a comprehensive contact center offering that includes AI, analytics, and custom tooling.





Set yourself up for DTC success with intelligent engagement

DTC is set to be highly lucrative for brands that commit to creating a customer experience that rivals traditional retail. eMarketer forecasts that US DTC ecommerce sales will reach \$151.2 billion this year—an increase of 16.9% compared to last year.¹

Selling direct means higher revenue and more market share—and it nets you all the benefits that retail partners have been receiving for years. Without a middleman, you'll see improved customer loyalty, higher lifetime value through personalized customer interactions and, crucially, all the valuable and actionable first-party customer data you can glean from transactions.

As brands rush to take advantage of the DTC boom, much of the focus is on their ecommerce and point-of-sale offering—preparing and launching the back-end infrastructure that'll prop up their shopping carts and stock management.

But if you're launching a DTC offering, it's not just the practicalities of purchasing and fulfillment that you need to pay attention to; even the best shopping experience can falter if your customers don't have access to reliable communication channels and helpful support services. (Plus, you'll miss out on valuable data and opportunities to build direct relationships with your customers.)

With Nuance's omnichannel customer engagement solutions, you don't need to build your support offering from scratch—and you don't need to buy separate point solutions from different vendors and try to connect them all together. Whether it's starting small with an IVR or launching a full cross-channel virtual assistant, we help some of the world's largest retailers create seamless customer journeys that boost engagement, enhance revenue and deliver loyalty-building experiences.

We can help you meet your customers in their preferred channels and understand their individual shopping journey in depth, maximizing every interaction and using the data you collect to inform strategic decision-making. With your own, first-party data to draw on, you're opening up a whole new world of personalization, demand forecasting, and relationship building with your customers, all vital for cutting down on time-to-value and creating a DTC model that delivers long-term growth.

57%

of customers are now choosing to purchase directly from manufacturers, reports Barclays Corporate Banking.

Trusted by:

75

of the Fortune 100

5

of the 9 largest global retailers

9 of the 12

biggest US retail brands

Let's start with the basics

Chatbots and Virtual Assistants

When you're building a digital customer support journey, a chatbot is the perfect place to start. They're the ideal first port of call for customers who need support—but don't necessarily need a human agent. Over 40% of customers already use chatbots to handle simple queries, with a further 27% interested in using them.² You can start really simply, with a few commonly asked questions, like "What are your shipping options?"

And when you're ready to evolve, a virtual assistant is the natural next step, introducing AI to drive conversational interactions that are personalized using context, customer intent, previous contacts, and more—with native support for more than 90 languages.

[Learn more about Chatbots and Virtual Assistants](#)

Conversational IVR

Voice is still the most popular channel for customers, with 34% preferring to call brands for support³—but that doesn't mean they need to be met with clunky decision trees or touchtone menus. Conversational IVR allows customers to speak naturally for effortless self-service, answering their queries and seamlessly escalating to a live agent when necessary.

[Learn more about Conversational IVR](#)

Virtual assistant provides the final answer for 85% of customer cases



This top three global retailer offers 24-hour service to its customers using its Virtual Assistant. The virtual assistant uses data from the brand's CRM to deliver personalized experiences, such as greeting customers by name and allowing them to ask questions about their orders.

[Read more in this case study.](#)

Create connected customer experiences

Messaging

Meet your customers in the channels they use every day with live and asynchronous messaging across channels like SMS, Google's Business Messages, Whatsapp, and more. Messaging encourages customers to start their journey in your more-economical digital channels, and allows smaller teams of agents to manage more interactions. Our messaging tools feed information back into the contact center, so agents have full context—and customers can even move between channels to get their queries answered in a way that's most convenient for them.

[Learn more about Messaging](#)

Voice-to-Digital

More than 70% of customers want a seamless mix of digital and traditional channels.⁴ By linking up your contact center components, you can help customers find the answers they need quickly and encourage them to use self-service options that are more cost-effective for you, improving satisfaction and conversion rates. Our Voice-to-Digital tool seamlessly shifts customers from your phone channel to a virtual assistant or messaging channel with context intact.

[Learn more about Voice-to-Digital](#)

A large retailer launches VA & Live Chat across new channels



This global fashion retailer made it easy for customers to engage directly with its Nuance Virtual Assistant and Live Chat through Google Search results and even Google Maps.



Create great experiences

- Empower your agents with real-time, on-screen coaching for great outcomes.
- Deliver relevant, timely and personalized information to customers proactively, through their channel of choice.
- Gain detailed insights into customer behavior and agent performance through engagement analytics.
- Get your omnichannel customer engagement up and running quickly and easily with Nuance Mix, the DIY conversational AI tooling platform.

Interested in more advanced use cases?

Agent Coach

Almost two thirds of customers will try self service first⁵—so if they end up talking to an agent, they're expecting expert support and fast resolutions. With real-time, on-screen coaching to guide your live agents through best practices, you can ensure consistency and satisfaction (for customers and agents alike) across your whole contact center. For interactions that need a human touch, Agent Coach helps your people resolve inquiries quickly and confidently. This improves conversion rates and helps drive revenue.

[Learn more about Agent Coach](#)

Proactive Engagement

Give your customers exactly what they need—even before they know they need it. Proactive messaging delivers relevant, timely, and personalized information to your customers through their preferred channels, with useful reminders, order status updates, tailored offers, and more. More than two thirds of customers find proactive notifications useful.⁶ And this removes the need for the customer to reach out to customer support in the first place, reducing service costs and delivering a great customer experience.

[Learn more about Proactive Engagement](#)

Analytics

Three quarters of customers expect agents to know who they are and understand their purchase history without them needing to repeat themselves. Our advanced analytics give you detailed insights into customer behavior and agent performance, so you can map progress against KPIs and ensure every interaction meets your standards, fits your brand message, and delights your customers.⁷

[Learn more about Analytics](#)

Nuance Mix

If you're interested in taking a DIY approach to your contact center, Nuance Mix is our conversational AI tooling platform. You can quickly and easily build bespoke customer journeys across every channel, and customize them to create a customer experience that's uniquely yours. Our experts will even help you get up and running to ensure maximum ROI and fastest time to value.

[Learn more about Nuance Mix](#)

Support for the whole journey

Contact Center AI

Our award-winning cloud-based contact center AI forms the backbone of all our CX solutions, handling over 31 billion interactions every year. Powered by our latest innovations in customer service technology, it's delivering higher customer satisfaction, faster resolutions, tighter security for brands across retail, financial services, telecoms, and more.

[Learn more about Contact Center AI](#)

Security and Authentication

Customers expect their retailers to provide tight security without introducing friction to their experience. Our biometric authentication tools authenticate genuine customers in seconds whether on the phone or in a digital channel—and prevent fraudsters getting in, delivering 92% reductions in fraud losses while boosting CSAT by 85%.

[Learn more about Security and Authentication](#)

Professional Services

96% of customers will abandon your brand if they're not satisfied by the service you provide⁸—so don't leave any channel's performance up to chance. Our team can work side-by-side with yours to plan, build, and optimize your customer journeys, using two decades of practical experience to find and execute the right strategy for your brand.

[Learn more about Professional Services](#)

Make your mark in DTC

At its heart, success in retail is about two things: delighting your customers, and moving faster (and smarter) than your competitors. Intelligent engagement solutions help you achieve both, creating loyalty-building customer experiences that set you apart in even the most crowded markets.

By introducing quick, reliable, and customer-friendly ways to interact with your brand, it'll be far easier to attract and keep new shoppers—and encourage them to tell their friends how great the experience was. And that all translates into more sales and higher lifetime value.

With Nuance, you can take a modular approach. Combine our industry-leading contact center solutions to create a journey that delivers high customer satisfaction, more revenue, and all the data you could ever need to optimize your DTC offering.

Talk to us today about how we can put our suite of intelligent engagement solutions to work for your brand—and help you grab that lucrative DTC opportunity with both hands.



LEARN MORE

If you'd like to discuss any of the opportunities we've highlighted in this guide, or learn more about how we can help, get in touch with us at CXExperts@nuance.com, or [visit our industry web page](#) to find out more.



Endnotes

- 1 How D2C brands are diversifying consumer experience to disrupt the retail industry. Insider Intelligence. Retrieved April 26, 2022 from: <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/how-d2c-brands-diversifying-consumer-experience-disrupt-retail-industry>
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About Nuance Communications, Inc.

[Nuance Communications](#) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and more than 75 percent of the Fortune 100 companies worldwide, Nuance creates intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others. Nuance is a Microsoft company.